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CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS



FEATURES

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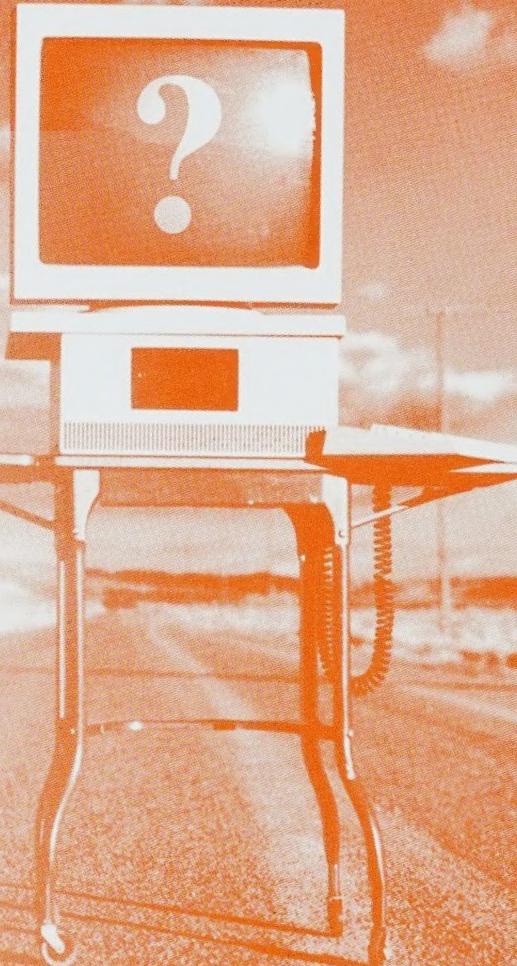
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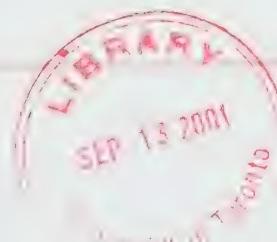
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Born in Montréal, **Anne Côté** graduated from the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) with bachelor degrees in graphic design and fine arts. She has specialized both in illustration and graphic design, working with different advertising and publishing agencies. Having taught graphic design in Montréal and South America, she currently teaches in Ottawa.

Family disruptions and childhood happiness

by Cara Williams

Most adults believe that childhood should be a care-free time. Studies in the United States and Europe generally attribute happiness to family life and social support;¹ that is, it may be closely associated with satisfying family relationships. Indeed, the stability of our family life during childhood affects our early years perhaps more than anything else. Disruptions in this stability such as divorce, remarriage, the death of a parent, or someone taking a parent's place can influence how happy we were as children and the type of relationships we had with our parents.



1. See Lane, Robert E. 2000. "Diminishing returns to income, companionship and happiness." *Journal of Happiness Studies* 1: 103-119.

This article is based on data from the 1995 General Social Survey on the family. The group studied began life living with both parents (adopted or birth); some remained in intact families until they were at least 15 years old, while others experienced a parental structure change before age 15. These changes consist of separation or divorce of parents, death of a parent, remarriage of a parent, or other changes in living arrangements for a child — such as living with other relatives, living in a foster home, or living with someone else. "Other changes" may be the result of parental break-up or death. The data do not indicate what precipitated these changes.

Respondents are considered to have had a very happy childhood or have been very close emotionally to father/mother if they answered that they agreed or strongly agreed with such a statement.

In the World Database of Happiness,² happiness is defined as "the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life-as-a-whole positively." When adults who experienced change in their parental structure look back at their childhood, do they see themselves as happy? Were they less close to their parents than children whose families remained intact? This paper uses data from the 1995 General Social Survey (GSS) to investigate these questions.

13% of Canadian adults experienced change in parental structure as children

According to the 1995 GSS, 96% (22.5 million) of Canadians 15 and older were born into two-parent families and most (87%) continued to live with both their parents until they were at least 15.³ Before age 15, about 1.9 million adult Canadians (8%) experienced one change in the parental structure of their family. Just over 800,000 experienced two and another 200,000 went through three or more. Most of these disruptions in family life are caused by death or divorce; for example, more than one-half of first changes a child

experienced resulted from separation or divorce, one-third from the death of a parent and the remainder were due to some other type of parental change.

Children of divorce have higher chance of marital instability

Many factors influence our happiness and how close we were to our parents in childhood. Although the consequences of divorce, separation or death of a parent on a child's psychological health are complex and not easy to measure, many of the social and economic effects have been well documented. For example, children of divorce are more likely to live in low income and have emotional, behavioral, social and academic problems.⁴ Children who experience a parent's death or divorce are more likely to leave home earlier, are less likely to finish high school and are more likely to rely on Income Assistance as adults. However, while the death of a parent does not seem to affect the likelihood of a child marrying or experiencing marital instability, adult children of divorce are more likely to put off marriage and have a higher chance of marital instability.⁵ Many of these

consequences might be considered markers of emotional upset that can influence a child's long-term life prospects.

The more instability children experience, the less happy they are Overall, almost 89% of adult Canadians said in 1995 that they had had a very happy childhood. But the rates vary with different family experiences. Among those who lived with both parents from birth until age 15, 92% felt that they had a very happy childhood. On the other hand, far fewer (72%) respondents who had experienced change in parental structure before age 15 believed they had been very happy children. This finding supports the notion that children find disruptions in the family's stability disturbing.⁶

2. More information on the World Database of Happiness can be found at www.eur.nl/fsw/research/happiness/hapintro.htm.
3. This includes birth parents and adopted parents.
4. Ambert, Dr. Anne-Marie. 1998. *Divorce: Facts, Figures and Consequences*. Vanier Institute of the Family.
5. Corak, Miles. 1999. *Death and Divorce: The Long Term Consequences of Parental Loss on Adolescents*. Statistics Canada catalogue 11F0019MPE, no. 135; Gruber, Jonathan. 2000. *Is Making Divorce Easier Bad for Children? The Long-run Implications of Unilateral Divorce*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper no. 7968; Boyd, M. and D. Norris. Autumn 1995. "Leaving the nest? The impact of family structure." *Canadian Social Trends*, and Frederick, J. and M. Boyd. Spring 1998. "The impact of family structure on high school completion." *Canadian Social Trends*.
6. It is important to note that the perception of childhood happiness is affected by numerous things in addition to structural change. For example, children of divorce may find themselves living in low income, or living in a new neighbourhood without old friendship and family ties.

| Respondent had a very happy childhood | Number of changes in parental structure | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------|---------|---------------|
| | None | One | Two | Three or more |
| Adults aged 15 and over | 19,435,000 | 1,916,000 | 819,000 | 245,000 |
| | | % | | |
| Strongly agree/agree | 92 | 76 | 70 | 50 |
| Disagree/strongly disagree | 8 | 23 | 27 | 49 |
| No opinion/not stated | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 |

Note: Includes all individuals who began life with two parents (biological or adoptive).

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1995.

up, compared with 79% of those that had some parental structure change. The real disparity, not surprisingly — because mothers more often get custody — occurs in the case of fathers; 74% of respondents from intact families agreed or strongly agreed that they had felt close to their father versus 52% of those who had experienced a change.

Adult sons are closer to their mothers than are daughters

In the general population, men and women have somewhat different perceptions of childhood happiness and the emotional closeness they felt to their parents as children. Almost 90% of men and 87% of women said they had had a very happy childhood. While the likelihood that sons and daughters felt close to their fathers was similar at about 70%, sons were more likely to feel close to their mothers than were daughters: 90% versus 85%, respectively. However, men and women who did not come from an intact family reported virtually the same levels of childhood happiness, suggesting that these changes affected both sexes equally.

| | Men | | Women | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| | No change | Change | % | No change | Change |
| Very happy childhood | 93 | 74 | | 91 | 71 |
| Very close emotionally to mother | 92 | 83 | | 87 | 76 |
| Very close emotionally to father | 73 | 53 | | 75 | 49 |

Note: Includes all individuals who began life with two parents (biological or adoptive).

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1995.

GSS data indicate that the more often children experience change in parental structure, the less likely they are to reflect upon their childhood as happy. The proportion of respondents who remembered their childhood as very happy declined from 76% of those who had only one change, to 70% for those with two changes and to 50% for those who reported three or more changes before age 15.

The likelihood they felt that their childhood was very happy was significantly different for children of divorce than for those who experienced the death of a parent. Among those whose parents separated or divorced, 71% felt that they had had a very happy childhood; among those who experienced the death of a parent, the proportion rose significantly to 87%. This finding

suggests that the effects of divorce on childhood happiness may be more pronounced than the effects of death and may have deeper consequences on quality of life or emotional health.

Children from intact families feel closer to parents

Changes in parental structure during childhood may influence whether or not we remember being emotionally close to our parents when we were children. After a divorce or separation, a child may not have as much contact with the parent who left since that parent is probably not as active in the child's day-to-day activities. In 1995, 89% of respondents who lived with both parents from birth to at least age 15 stated that they felt very close to their mother when they were growing

Summary

When adult children who experienced family disruptions during childhood look back on these years, they are less likely to recall their childhood as happy than those whose families were intact. Furthermore, the greater the number of parenting changes these individuals experienced, the less likely they are to believe they were happy. It also appears that adult children who experienced a structural change do not recall being as close to their parents as those who did not experience a change.



Cara Williams is an analyst with Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

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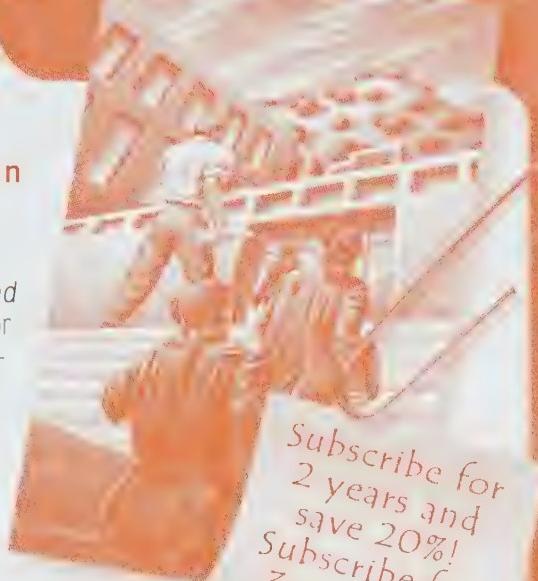
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Kids and teens on the Net

by Warren Clark

The Internet is changing the way we communicate, receive news and information, acquire new skills, work and do business. It is also transforming the world of education and learning as people of all ages can now communicate and work with others from all over the world. In addition, the Net provides opportunities to bring an abundance of images and information into homes and classrooms.

More and more households are connected to the Internet. This might be because parents believe their children need Internet access at home to keep up with their peers; in fact, 55% of parents with home computers said they had bought them specifically for their children.¹ Some teachers now give homework assignments that require finding information on the Internet and students without home access may have to queue up to connect in the classroom, school library or a friend's home. But even having the Net at home may be problematic, especially if there are several children competing for time. Because over 75%



What you should know about this study

The 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) interviewed about 25,000 adults aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces. It researched access to and use of information communications technology, primarily the Internet. This article focusses on the Internet use of children and teens aged 5 to 18 living with their parents. Parents were asked if and where their children used the Internet, how their children's Internet use is monitored and whether they encourage the use of the Internet for schoolwork or entertainment.

Counts of children using the Internet are not available from this survey because parents were asked general questions about the Net use of all their children and not that of each particular child. Thus, parents are identified as having a child using the Internet if at least one of their children does so. The results are often presented as a percentage of parents with children aged 5 to 18; this represents about 6.0 million parents. In some cases parents may not know if their children use the Internet at school, at a friend's house or at the library, meaning that Internet usage by children may be underestimated. The survey asked if children used the Internet at several locations, but did not inquire about how much time they spent connected to the Net.

Parental computer skills were self-assessed and rated relative to people the same age. About 23% of parents rated their computer skills as very good or excellent, 24% as good, 21% as fair, 14% as poor and 17% had never used a computer.

Important: Strictly speaking, parents are responding to questions about the Internet activities of their school-aged children, therefore the figures quoted reflect the knowledge of the parents. For brevity, the text may refer to the percentage of school-age children or the percentage of children.

1. 66% of parents reported educational advantages as the greatest benefit of their children's use of the Internet. Media Awareness Network and Environmentics Research Group. *Canada's Children in a Wired World: The Parents' View — Final Report*. 2000. p.14. <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SS1/sf/finalreporteng.pdf>.

of children who use the Net at home access it through a telephone line, "surfing" competes with family telephone use, unless another line or a more expensive high-speed service is available.

This article examines the extent to which children between the ages of 5 and 18 have access to the Internet at home. It focusses on parents' knowledge of their children's use of the Net, the factors that contribute to or limit access, parental concerns about privacy, and the limitations parents place on using the Internet.

Nearly half of children used the Internet at home

In 2000, 82% of parents reported that their school-age children used the Internet. School was the most common point of access (71%), while 45% accessed it at home.² In contrast, a considerably smaller proportion of parents (59%) than children used the Internet themselves. Nonetheless, over one in three parents helped their children with the Internet.

Boys and girls had nearly equal Internet access rates at home,³ although girls may visit different sites than boys.^{4,5} Young children between the ages of 5 and 9 were only about one-third as likely to use the Internet from home (21%) as teens aged 15 to 18 (58%).⁶ The rate of school use and access at other locations also increased with the age of children.

Children of educated and high-income parents more likely to use the Internet at home

In 1999, Canada completed connecting all interested public schools and public libraries to the Information Highway. Consequently, about 9 out of every 10 students attended elementary, intermediate or secondary schools that had access to the Internet for educational purposes.⁷ With nearly every school having connections, children's Internet access at school shows



Internet use is highest among older teens...

| Parents with children aged | Location of children's access to the Internet | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------|--------|-------|
| | All locations | Home | School | Other |
| 5-18 | 82 | 45 | 71 | 37 |
| 5-9 | 48 | 21 | 32 | 13 |
| 10-14 | 93 | 50 | 84 | 43 |
| 15-18 | 96 | 58 | 85 | 55 |

...and in homes with high socio-economic status

| | Location of children's access to the Internet | | | |
|---|---|------|--------|-------|
| | All locations | Home | School | Other |
| All children | 82 | 45 | 71 | 37 |
| Education of parent | | | | |
| High school diploma or less | 79 | 34 | 69 | 34 |
| College, trade/vocational diploma or some postsecondary | 82 | 45 | 73 | 40 |
| University degree | 86 | 66 | 73 | 38 |
| Household income | | | | |
| Less than \$30,000 | 78 | 26 | 69 | 35 |
| \$30,000-\$49,999 | 77 | 33 | 67 | 35 |
| \$50,000-\$79,999 | 83 | 48 | 73 | 40 |
| \$80,000 and over | 86 | 65 | 74 | 37 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

little variation regardless of the socio-economic status of the household.

In contrast, children from households with higher income and education levels were more likely to

have home access. About two-thirds of parents with a university degree had children who used the Internet from home compared with one-third of parents with a high school diploma

2. Parents were less likely to know about their children's Internet access at school or at other locations than at home. About 14% of parents did not know about Internet access at school, 10% at other locations and 3% at home. The percentages reported here are of parents who know about their children's Internet use.
3. Comparison of the access rates for families who had only boys with those who had only girls.
4. YTV Kid & Tween Report 2000 Wave 6. October 25, 2000. <http://www.newswire.ca/releases/October2000/25/c6279.html>.
5. Environics Research Group. 2000. *Young Canadians in a Wired World — Parents and Youth Focus Groups in Toronto and Montreal*. p.5, <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSI/sf/05380report.pdf>.
6. Among parents of 5- to 18-year-olds, one million reported that none of their children used the Internet. Nearly 85% of parents whose children did not use the Internet had young children aged 5 to 9.
7. Statistics Canada. October 12, 1999. "Computer technology in schools." *The Daily*. <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/991012/d991012a.htm>.

| Parental education | Total | Parental computer skills (self-assessed) | | | | | |
|---|-------|--|-----------|------|------|------|-----------------------|
| | | Excellent | Very good | Good | Fair | Poor | Never used a computer |
| % of parents whose children use the Internet at home | | | | | | | |
| All parents | 45 | 71 | 61 | 54 | 46 | 34 | 16 |
| High school diploma or less | 34 | 63 | 51 | 50 | 41 | 30 | 17 |
| College, trade/vocational diploma or some postsecondary | 45 | 65 | 57 | 51 | 43 | 35 | 16 |
| University degree | 66 | 79 | 73 | 64 | 63 | 44 | -- |

-- Sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

or less. Similarly, about 65% of parents with household income over \$80,000 reported that their children used the Internet at home, compared with 26% of parents in households with an income under \$30,000.

Lone-parent families are more likely to have lower income than two-parent families and this affects the home Internet access of their children. In 2000, 32% of lone parents said their children used the Internet from home compared with 47% of two-parent families. In addition, lone parents were less likely to help their children with the Internet and tended to have fewer computer skills to provide help.

Parent's computer savvy helps kids connect

Children used the Internet at home much more frequently if their parents had strong computer skills.⁸ About 71% of parents who considered their computer skills excellent reported that their kids used the Internet at home compared with 16% of parents who never used a computer. Parents with more computer savvy were more likely to have the equipment necessary for their children to connect to the Internet, to help their children use the Internet and to be less concerned about security and privacy

issues. All in all, they viewed the Internet more positively than parents with less computer savvy.

About half of parents worry about privacy

It is easy for children to become skilled navigators of the Net, and advertisers and marketers are increasingly using this medium to target children and gather information for marketing purposes. Such information can be obtained by asking children to register in order to play games, visit their favourite cartoon site or enter a contest. As users move from Web page to Web page, "cookies" (electronic files) may be placed on the computer's hard drive to record

what was done at a Web site and possibly track where they go on the Web.⁹ When you enter information on a Web site or any other place on the Internet, you potentially give up a bit of your privacy. Recently enacted federal legislation limits the uses of personal information for some enterprises.^{10,11}

Parents worry about online privacy. In 2000, 46% of parents expressed great concern over this issue. This worry had an impact on their children's access to the Internet at home. Those parents who were most concerned about privacy were less likely (44%) to allow their children to use the Internet at home than those who were not (52%). About 470,000

-
8. Strong parental computer skills are linked to higher levels of education and household income. After accounting for these factors, however, children's use of the Internet at home is still positively influenced by the parent's computer skills.
 9. Cookies identify the computer, not the person using it. But information that you provide about yourself to a Web site may be linked to the cookie that is placed on your computer.
 10. *The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (Bill C-6) came into effect on January 1, 2001. It protects the personal information of individuals in the course of commercial activities. The Act gives people control over their own personal information by requiring organizations to obtain consent to collect, use or disclose information about them. As of January 1, 2001 the Act encompasses federal works, undertakings and businesses including banks, telephone companies, cable television and broadcasting companies, firms engaged in interprovincial transportation and air carriers. By January 2004 the Act will also cover provincially regulated enterprises such as retail stores. http://www.privcom.gc.ca/information/02_05_d_08_e.asp.
 11. The Statistics Canada Web site, <http://www.statcan.ca>, does not use cookies.

Special insert

Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights

*The results of the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) were released on August 17, 2001. The survey, first conducted by Statistics Canada in 1997 as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey, was repeated in the fall of 2000. The 2000 survey was based on a representative sample of 14,724 Canadians aged 15 and over. For our readers who are interested in the latest data on volunteers and volunteering, Canadian Social Trends reprints this extract of the introductory chapter to the analytical report **Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians**, which analyzes results from the NSGVP.*

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating was developed through a partnership of federal government departments and voluntary sector organizations. These include the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Canadian Heritage, Health Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Statistics Canada and Volunteer Canada.

The federal government and the voluntary sector recently launched the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) to help strengthen voluntary organizations in Canada. It formally recognizes the voluntary sector as an important pillar of Canadian society along with the private and public sectors. The VSI provided funding to conduct the NSGVP in 2000. Current plans call for the survey to be repeated in 2003.

The NSGVP offers a rich source of data on many aspects of charitable giving, volunteering and participating. It serves not only as a barometer of voluntary and civic action, but also points to areas where more in-depth study is needed.

Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating is available free on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). Look under Our products and services, Free publications, and then Social conditions. The report can also be purchased in paper format (71-542-XPE, \$15).

Introduction

The National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) provides a 'snapshot' of the state of voluntary and civic action in Canada and offers a means of tracking changes in giving, volunteering and participating over time. Every three years, the NSGVP lets us assess the extent to which individual Canadians are moved to support their fellow citizens, their communities and their environment with voluntary contributions of time and money. The 2000 NSGVP shows that the support Canadians provide is dynamic and has been changing since the first benchmark NSGVP survey in 1997.

The 2000 survey revealed the enormous breadth of support that Canadians provide, both individually and collectively. Canadians donate money and volunteer time to support the arts, local sports clubs, medical research, food banks, shelters, international relief efforts, and their own places of worship, among many other causes. They help their neighbours and friends in a variety of ways, such as by driving people to appointments, visiting individuals who are ill or shut-in, and baby-sitting small children. Canadians take out memberships in thousands of organizations in order to pursue collective goals and to participate in civic activities. They are active in rural areas, in towns and cities and, more and more, in virtual communities on the Internet. Canadians volunteer their time, money and skills to support local, regional, national and global causes.

As we report, the 2000 NSGVP shows that there have been a number of changes in the support that Canadians provide. Although the percentage of the population that donates money to charitable and non-profit organizations remains unchanged, there has been a decline in the percentage of people who volunteer since 1997. Meanwhile, those who are involved in giving and volunteering appear to be doing more. Canadian donors are giving larger average donations and volunteers are increasing the average amount of time they contribute. Although the total number of charitable dollars given has increased, the total number of volunteer hours provided has declined. In 2000, charitable and non-profit organizations were relying on a somewhat smaller core group of people to provide the bulk of charitable dollars and volunteer hours.

Summary of main findings

This report provides an overview of the findings of the 2000 NSGVP and reveals the changes that have occurred since 1997. Because giving, volunteering and participating are influenced by a complex set of factors, it is difficult to attribute changes in these behaviours over time exclusively to one particular factor. Given the overview nature of the report, detailed causal explanations about the survey's findings will require more extensive research.

Giving to organizations

Almost 22 million Canadians—91% of the population aged 15 and older—made donations, either financial or in-kind, to charitable and non-profit organizations between October 1, 1999 and September 30, 2000. Almost 8 in 10 (78%) made direct financial donations either in response to a request from, or by approaching, an organization; 41% deposited money in cash boxes at store check-outs; and 4% reported leaving a bequest to a charitable, religious or spiritual organization as part of a will. In-kind donations were also common: 69% donated clothing or household goods and 54% donated food to a charitable organization such as a food bank.

The estimated financial support provided totalled more than \$5 billion and represented an increase of 11% in giving since 1997. The vast majority—\$4.9 billion—came from the 78% of Canadians who gave in response to requests from organizations or by approaching organizations on their own initiative.¹ The percentage of Canadians making such donations was unchanged from 1997.

The average annual donation in 2000 increased by 8% from 1997, to \$259. Canadian donors made fewer, but larger, individual donations in 2000: donors gave an average of 3.7 donations, which averaged \$70, compared with 1997, when donors gave an average of 4 donations, which averaged \$60.

¹ The remaining amount, estimated at just over \$100 million, came from money deposited in collection boxes such as those often located at store check-out counters.

Summary of main findings of the 2000 Youth in Transition Survey for the 18- to 20-year-old cohort*Special insert***At a Crossroads: Highlights**

The results of the 2000 Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) for the 18- to 20-year-old cohort, a longitudinal survey undertaken jointly by Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, were released on January 23, 2002. The first cycle of the survey was conducted between January and April 2000. More than 22,000 young people aged 18 to 20 in the 10 provinces participated. For our readers who are interested in the latest data on youths, Canadian Social Trends reprints this extract of the foreword and highlights of **At a Crossroads**, a descriptive overview of results from YITS covering 18- to 20-year-olds.

Human capital – having a highly educated labour force that possesses the knowledge and skills needed for innovation and productivity growth, and that is flexible and adaptable in the face of ongoing change – is the cornerstone of success for societies living and working in today's knowledge-based, globalized environment. Given this context, Canada's long-term economic and social potential depends in good measure on how successfully youth navigate school and work transitions. The Youth in Transition Survey was designed to examine key transitions in the lives of young people as they move from high school to post-secondary education, and from schooling to the labour market.

In several respects, youth aged 18 to 20 are at a crossroads. For many, the transition from school to work is a complex, non-linear process – some youth attend school and work at the same time, others return to school after starting out in the workforce, and others move between a number of part-time or temporary jobs before entering into a more stable employment relationship. With such variable pathways, a survey that tracks the progress of youth over time is a key instrument for identifying the factors that can assist youth in the successful pursuit of their education and employment goals. The second cycle of YITS, scheduled for early 2002, will collect new information from this same group of youth, tracking their educational and labour market activities over time.

At a Crossroads: First results for the 18- to 20-year-old cohort of the Youth in Transition Survey is available free on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). Look under our Products and Services, Free Publications, and then Social Conditions. It is also accessible at Human Resources Development Canada's Applied Research Branch Web site at (www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb) as well as at the PISA/YITS Project Web site at (www.pisa.gc.ca). The report is also available in paper format (81-591-XPE).

Introduction

Global change and the information and communications revolution present both opportunities and challenges to young people who are learning and working in the first few years of the new millennium. Young people who have the needed skills and knowledge will be better equipped to succeed as global trade expands and as economic opportunities open. As baby-boomers reach retirement age, the demand for new, skilled labour market participants will grow. In addition to the expanded opportunities that become available for youth themselves, Canada's competitiveness is improved by having young, highly skilled additions to its labour pool.

Global economic fluctuations typically have a large impact on youth employment. Business leaders and social analysts believe that to succeed, Canada's young people will need to be adaptable and innovative, and to have sophisticated communication and technological skills.

Building the requisite human capital, or skills and knowledge, begins with a strong educational foundation. The completion of high school is widely recognized in Canada and in other countries as the minimum education requirement. However, the labour market demand for skills and knowledge suggests that post-secondary education is fast becoming the new educational standard. Certainly, those youth who fail to complete high school will have particular problems integrating into the new economy and society.

The Youth in Transition Survey for the 18- to 20-year-old cohort provides a range of information on the education and employment experiences of youth including secondary and post-secondary participation and comprehensive employment histories. Data were also collected on school engagement, skills, training, volunteering, extra-curricular activities, and educational and occupational aspirations as well as on income and post-secondary financing, family socioeconomic characteristics, parents, social and cultural capital, ethnicity, language spoken in the home, behaviours and peer influences.

Highlights

The report provides a descriptive overview of where youth stand in terms of both their educational participation and attainment, and their labour market participation.

By the age of 20, the vast majority of Canadian youth (85% as of December 1999) had graduated from high school. About 70% of high school graduates between the ages of 18 and 20 had gone on to post-secondary education.

Dropping out of high school

There was a sharp decrease in the high school dropout rate through the 1990s. As of December 1999, the high school dropout rate for 20-year-olds stood at 12%. This compares to a dropout rate of 18% reported by the 1991 School Leavers Survey.

Although, in general, high school dropouts had lower grades than graduates, 47% of dropouts obtained a B grade average or better. Dropouts were less likely to have had close friends who pursued post-secondary education, and were more likely to have engaged in skipping class, drinking alcohol regularly and using drugs frequently. Dropouts were twice as likely as graduates to live with a single parent (32% versus 16%) and three times as likely to have parents who had not finished high school (27% versus 9%).

High school dropout rates remained high in most jurisdictions for young males compared to young females.

Post-secondary participation

Higher percentages of young women were either currently enrolled in post-secondary education (PSE) or were post-secondary graduates than young men.

PSE participants were least likely to have come from single-parent families and were more likely to report having lived with both parents while in high school.

PSE continuers tended to come from families where one or both parents had a university degree.

Skills

Youth generally felt most confident about their reading skills and least confident about their math and computer skills. There were clear gender differences: girls tended to rate their reading and writing skills more positively than did boys; boys, in contrast, rated their problem-solving, math and computer skills more highly than did girls.

Larger proportions of high school dropouts consistently assessed their skill levels as being fair/poor; the largest percentages of youth who assessed their skills as being very good/excellent were those enrolled at the post-secondary level.

High school dropouts were less likely than other young people to have been exposed to career and job-skills courses while in high school.

Volunteering

Youth generally regarded their volunteer experience positively – over half of those who had volunteered reported that they had learned new skills they could apply to a job.

Labour market participation

Labour market participation patterns reflected education status. Rates of full-time employment were highest for 18- to 20-year-olds who had completed a post-secondary program. Though employed, many of the jobs held by high school graduates with no PSE were part-time. The jobless rate (which includes both those who were unemployed and those not in the labour force) was highest for high school dropouts with no PSE.

Gender differences in labour market participation are apparent. Generally, higher percentages of males had full-time jobs; part-time work was more common for females, especially among high school graduates with no PSE.

Experiences during first year of post-secondary education

Close to half of PSE participants attended a community college or CEGEP in their first year of PSE; about one-third attended university; and the balance attended a range of other non-university post-secondary institutions such as technical, trade or vocational schools, university colleges or private business or training schools.

Just over 40% of university students lived in residence in their first post-secondary year; 43% lived with their parents. The vast majority of students at other types of post-secondary institutions lived with their parents during their first year of PSE.

PSE participants generally had positive attitudes and relationships during their first post-secondary year. But PSE leavers (individuals who left PSE before graduating), tended to be much less positive than continuers in terms of their "fit" academically.

Access to post-secondary education

Just under half of 18- to 20-year-olds reported facing barriers to going as far in school as they would like. About two-thirds of those reporting barriers cited financial barriers.

Additional barriers reported by high school continuers and dropouts were: not being able to get into the PSE program they wanted or marks that were too low; not enough interest or motivation; and in the case of high school dropouts, wanting to work and needing to care for their own children.

Students relied on a wide variety of funding sources for PSE. The most common source was earnings from employment. Compared to PSE graduates and PSE leavers higher percentages of PSE continuers also received money from their parents or partner, from scholarships, awards or prizes, from personal savings and from government-sponsored student loans.

Summary of main findings of the 2000 Youth in Transition Survey for the 18- to 20-year-old cohort

The percentages who had ever applied for a government-sponsored student loan were highest for PSE participants. Relatively few high school graduates with no PSE, high school continuers or high school dropouts with no PSE had ever made such an application.

Of those who had applied for a government-sponsored student loan, close to 20% of PSE continuers reported that they had been rejected at least once; this fell to 16% of PSE leavers and 13% of PSE graduates.

Today's knowledge-based society presents youth with both opportunities and challenges as they make the transition to the labour market and full adulthood. The challenge for youth is to ensure that the education and labour market choices they make now will allow them to participate fully in the economy and the society of the 21st century. That means having the education and skills that are needed and having the ability and flexibility to be able to learn new skills as time goes on.

The 2000 NSGVP reveals that Canadian charities and non-profit organizations continue to rely on a relatively small group of donors. The top one-quarter of donors who gave \$213 or more during the year accounted for 82% of the total donations.

Volunteering through an organization

The 2000 NSGVP shows that 6.5 million Canadians, or 27% of the population aged 15 and older, volunteered² during the one-year period preceding the survey. This is a decline from the 7.5 million Canadians, or 31% of the population, who volunteered in 1997. There were fewer volunteers in 2000 despite there being more Canadians; the population of Canada increased by almost 2.5% from 1997 to 2000.

However, with the decline in the numbers of Canadians volunteering, we observe an increase in the intensity of volunteering among those who do volunteer. On average, each individual volunteer in 2000 contributed 162 hours over the year, up from 149 hours during 1997. This increase happened in spite of the finding that the most common reason given for not volunteering more was the lack of time.

With fewer Canadians volunteering, the total number of hours volunteered declined by an estimated 5% since 1997 to about 1.05 billion hours in 2000.

As in 1997, the survey also found that volunteering was not evenly distributed throughout the population. In 2000, the top quarter of volunteers, for example, contributed an average of 471 hours of their time throughout the year and accounted for 73% of the overall total hours. This is similar to 1997, when the top quarter of volunteers accounted for 72% of the overall total hours, but contributed, on average, 431 hours of their time. However, it is worth noting that in absolute numbers there are fewer volunteers in the top quarter than there were in 1997—approximately 1.6 million in 2000 versus about 1.9 million in 1997.

Other forms of support

Many Canadians provide support to individuals directly rather than working through a charitable or voluntary

organization. Such support can be provided through donations of money or donations of time.

The NSGVP asked Canadians about the types of support they provided to individuals outside their household. Forty-one percent of respondents indicated that they gave money directly to relatives who did not live with them, to homeless or street people, or to others. This has declined slightly from the 44% who reported giving money to individuals outside their household in 1997.

Almost 8 out of 10 Canadians (77%) contributed their time to assist people on their own, not through an organization. As was the case in 1997, the most commonly reported activities were shopping or driving to appointments or stores, performing housework, babysitting and doing home maintenance or yard work for others.

Civic participation

The NSGVP also asked questions about other forms of involvement in society. Canadians were asked to report on their membership in associations and organizations, voting in elections, and ways in which they kept abreast of news and public affairs.

Just over one-half of respondents (51%) reported that they belonged to at least one organization or group in 2000 (such as community associations, service clubs and unions). The same percentage of Canadians (51%) reported such memberships in 1997.

Patterns of support and linkages

Many Canadians support each other and their communities by donating their money, giving their time, or practising forms of active citizenship. However, there are some groups of Canadians who engage in these activities more than others. Moreover, individuals who give, volunteer and participate in any of these behaviours are more likely than others to engage in all of these behaviours. For example, volunteers are more likely than non-volunteers to make charitable donations, help others directly and belong to associations or community groups.

2 In the NSGVP, volunteering is defined as doing unpaid activities as part of a group or organization.

Social and economic context: 1997 to 2000

Since giving, volunteering and participating are influenced by a complex set of factors, it is probably unwise to draw conclusions about variations in these behaviours among different regions and population groups without taking these factors into account. For example, variations among provinces in the volunteer rate of those aged 15 to 19 can be partly attributed to the requirement in some provinces that students perform compulsory community service in order to graduate from secondary school. Similarly, strong government support for certain types of charities and non-profit organizations in a particular province may reduce their need to raise funds and consequently lower the level of donations they receive.

When trying to understand changes in giving, volunteering and participating over time, it is particularly important to take note of changes in the broader environment in which these behaviours occur. For example, charitable donations appear to vary with changes in economic conditions, which can affect discretionary income. It is also reasonable to expect that volunteering may be affected by economic changes, particularly those that influence the availability of discretionary time.

In the three-year period since the 1997 NSGVP, Canada saw steady economic growth and a decline in the national unemployment rate from over 9% in 1997 to under 7% by the end of 2000. Over one million more Canadians were working in 2000 than in 1997. Moreover, the level of full-time employment for younger Canadians (aged 15 to 24 years) increased by more than 15% from 1997 to 2000.

Such changes in the job market may have an impact on volunteering. For example, much of the growth in volunteering between 1987 and 1997 can be attributed to an increase in volunteering among young people, many of whom identified volunteering as a means of obtaining employment.³ With increased labour market demand for younger adults, the use of volunteer activity to gain work experience may have been reduced for those aged 20 to 24, thereby contributing to the observed decline in volunteering in this group.

Income levels have also been increasing since 1997, a development that should have a positive influence on

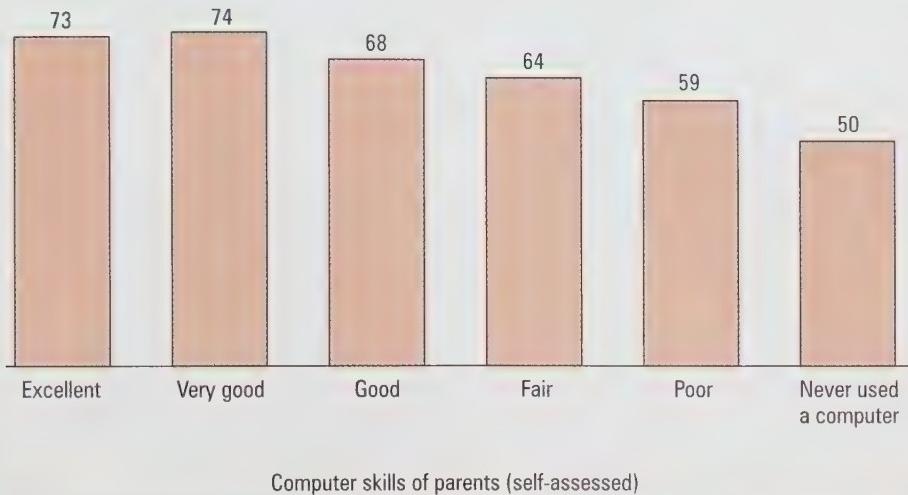
charitable donations. For example, in 1998, average family income rebounded to its highest level in a decade and registered the strongest annual increase since 1989.⁴ With higher incomes, people have more money for discretionary expenditures.⁵

Tax policy changes may also have an influence on charitable donations. The introduction of better tax incentives for donations led to a 14% jump in charitable giving in 1996. Donations claimed by taxfilers have continued to increase moderately since that time.⁶ Before 1996, Canadians could claim tax credits for charitable donations up to a maximum of 20% of their taxable income. This maximum was raised to 50% of taxable income for the 1996 tax year and raised again to 75% for the 1997 tax year.⁷

-
- 3 The 1987 Voluntary Activity Survey assessed volunteer participation using many of the same questions on volunteering as the 1997 NSGVP, enabling comparisons to be made between findings in 1987 and 1997.
 - 4 In 1998, average family after-tax income was up 3.7% from the previous year after adjusting for inflation. The major source of this increase was market income that included earnings from employment ("Family income 1998," *The Daily*, June 12, 2000).
 - 5 For example, according to the 1999 Survey of Household Spending, average household total expenditure from 1997 to 1999 increased by 7.1% ("Household spending 1999," *The Daily*, December 12, 2000).
 - 6 See McKeown, L. 2001. "Trends in individual donations: 1984–1999." *Research Bulletin*, 8, 1. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.
 - 7 The 2000 federal budget also reduced the capital gains inclusion rate from 75% to 66.7%, effectively further reducing the rate for gifts of publicly traded shares; it continues to be one-half the standard rate.

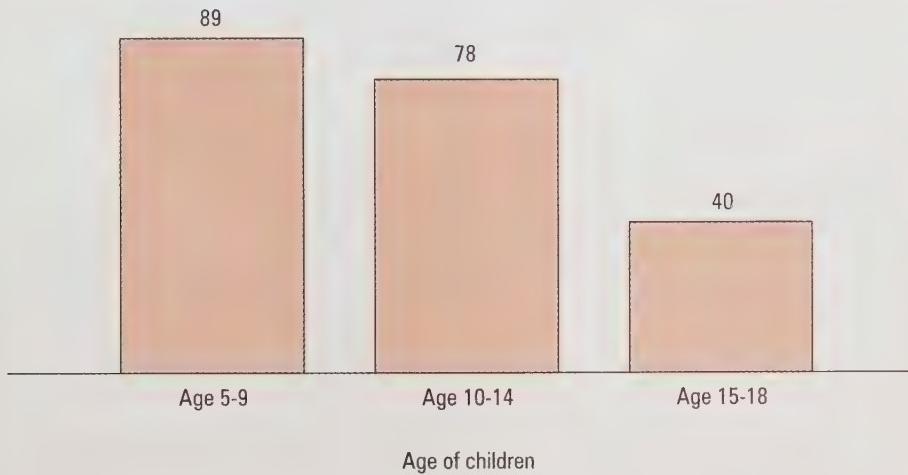
Parents are more likely to monitor home Internet use if they are computer-savvy...

% of parents who monitor their children's Internet use at home



... or if they have younger children

% of parents who monitor their children's Internet use at home



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

parents (8% of all parents) expressed no opinion about Internet privacy. This group of parents reported the lowest level of home Internet use among their children, at 23%.¹²

Protecting children

Many parents are concerned that the content their children may be viewing includes sexually explicit material or sites that promote hate, drug use, fraud or computer hacking.¹³ While

79% of parents encourage their children to use the Net for school work and 45% for entertainment, the accessibility of unsuitable information continues to generate debate and concern. An innocent keyword typed into a search engine or the misspelling of a Web site's name can lead to sites that may contain objectionable content. Unsolicited e-mail messages sent to thousands of people at a time encouraging them to buy something,

do something or visit a Web site, can entice children to visit sites that are inappropriate for them. About 6% of parents whose children use the Net reported that their children had come across content that promoted hate or violence while another 12% simply did not know if their children had seen such material.

Internet chat rooms, where children can communicate with each other in real time, are enormously popular, but are not without risk. Children may encounter profanity, inquiries about personal information, inappropriate advances, or adults masquerading as children.¹⁴ Cyber-stalking is a threat to many users of online chat rooms, including children. Teenagers are particularly at risk because their Net use is more often unsupervised than younger children's.¹⁵

Although few parents thought their children had seen content promoting hate or violence, most parents recognized the need to monitor their children's use of the Net. Nearly two out of three (63%) stated that it was very important to monitor their children's Internet use, one in five (20%) thought it was somewhat important and only one in seven (14%) felt it

12. Of the 470,000 parents who had no opinion on Internet privacy, 60% had never used a computer (compared with 17% of all parents of school-age children), 78% had never used the Internet and 59% did not report their level of household income.

13. "Digital chaperones for kids." *Consumer Reports Online*. March 2001. <http://www.consumerreports.org/Special/ConsumerInterest/Reports/0203fil0.html>.

14. Ipsos-Reid. November 14, 2000. *Uncomfortable Liaisons*. http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/displaypr.cfm?id_to_view=1113&refer=main.

15. American Bar Association. August 2000. *Facts about Privacy and Cyberspace* (page 5 of 6). <http://gigalaw.com/articles/aba-2000-08-p5.html>.

was not at all important. Many of the parents in this last group had older teenagers and perhaps felt that they were mature enough to manage their own Internet use. Nevertheless, 67% of parents employed some means to monitor their children's use of the Internet at home, most often supervising their time on the Net. Only 8% of parents locked or disabled the home computer to control access, and 8% used software to monitor their use or filter offensive sites.

Parents make efforts to regulate the use of the Internet while at home, but elsewhere, control is more limited. About 53% of parents reported that their children's Internet access at school was monitored compared with 38% at other locations. However, 30% of parents didn't know whether or not monitoring took place at school or at other locations.

The parents who did not monitor their children's use of the Internet at home were more likely to have older teenagers (49%), or were not computer savvy themselves and therefore may not recognize the risk of exposure. Half of parents who had never used a computer monitored their kids' use of the Internet at home, compared with 73% of those who rated their computer skills as excellent.

Summary

Children are frequently more comfortable, knowledgeable, and literate than their parents about computers and the Internet. Today, kids are learning, playing, communicating, working and creating communities in very different ways than their parents. Internet access at school is a great equalizer as it shows little variation by social status. Perhaps because of this, children are more likely to be Internet users than their parents.

Many parents are concerned about their children's use of the Internet. Despite their anxieties, Internet users engage in a wide range of activities that require them to trust in each other and the organizations that run Web sites. Parents can support their children by teaching them to validate and authenticate information, to identify offensive material, to protect their privacy, and to manage their time online.



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Generosity: 30 years of giving

by Paul Reed

This article has been adapted from *Generosity in Canada: Trends in personal gifts and charitable donations over three decades, 1969-1997*. This is the second article in a series of reports on giving and volunteering from Statistics Canada's Nonprofit Sector Knowledge Base Project to mark the International Year of Volunteers.

Generosity — giving freely to others — is a complex and multifaceted behaviour, one that is highly susceptible to social judgement. Though it is treated extensively in major religions, in works of philosophy and in literature, it has received little empirical examination in the social sciences. Because a very large part of generosity in contemporary societies is expressed through household spending behaviour, broad features of Canadians' generosity can be learned from surveys of household expenditure.

From 1969 to 1996, the Family Expenditure Survey (FAMEX) provided such data in Canada. In 1997, FAMEX was redesigned and renamed the Survey of Household Spending, with several changes made in the gifts and contributions category; for example, expenditures on non-monetary gifts other than clothing were no longer being identified. The following analysis is based principally on FAMEX figures for the 1969 to 1996 period because of the continuity and consistency of subcategories; selected statistics are provided, however, for 1997, 1998 and 1999. This 30-year statistical series contains a rich array

CST What you should know about this study

Definitions:

Persons outside household: individuals (family, friend or other) who do not live in the same household as the respondent.

Charitable contributions to organizations: can be either direct financial donations or in-kind donations. *Financial* donations involve giving money directly to organizations, depositing spare change in cash boxes, or leaving a bequest to a charitable, religious or spiritual organization. *In-kind* donations include giving clothing, household goods or food to a charitable organization or food bank.

Non-monetary gifts to individuals: gifts of flowers, clothing, household goods or food items.

Income quintile: division of the population into five equally-sized groups from the lowest to the highest income. The lowest quintile contains those 20% of households with the lowest income, while the highest quintile contains the 20% with the highest income.

of patterns that reveal Canadian households' diverse and changing giving habits. While overall expenditures on gifts and charitable donations have been rising slowly for many years, the manner in which Canadians give has been undergoing significant change.

Total giving to individuals and charitable organizations

- The proportion of households that reported giving gifts and charitable donations declined from a peak of 92% in 1982 to 87% in 1996.
- From 1969 to 1999, average annual total giving by all households — both gifts to individuals outside the household and charitable

contributions — rose from \$986 to \$1,700 per year.¹ This increase, however, amounted to a rise from 3.3% to 3.5% of disposable income. This small change is understandable in light of the fact that the disposable income of Canadian households has remained flat for the past two decades.²

1. All dollar values are presented in constant 1996 dollars.

2. It is possible that there has been a net decline in total giving by households because the expenditure category "gifts of money and contributions" includes spousal and child support payments and the incidence and magnitude of such payments has been rising.

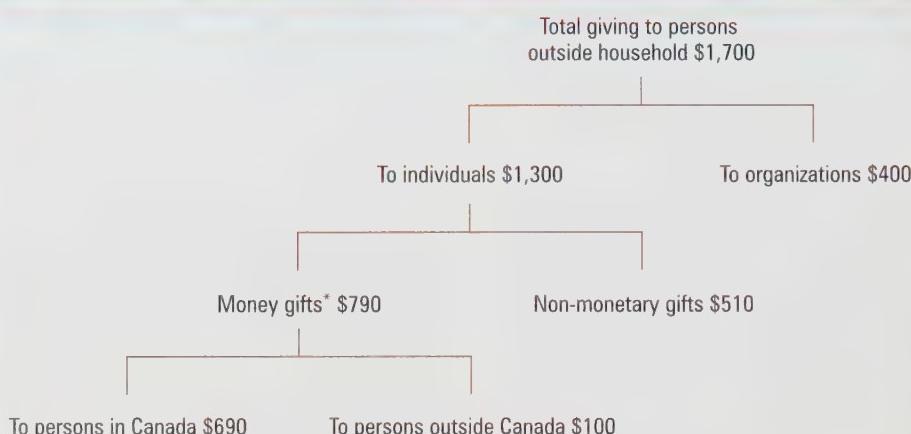
Gifts and contributions to individuals

- In 1996, 76% of all giving was to individuals, up from 62% in 1969. A significant portion of this involved spousal and child support payments, however. In 1998, support payments amounted to 30% of total gifts and contributions to individuals.
- Money gifts (averaging \$790) made up 61% of all gifts to individuals in 1996, a large increase from 38% in 1969.
- Of every dollar given to individuals in 1996, only 12 cents went to people living outside Canada, down from 34 cents in 1969.
- Non-monetary gifts to individuals, which accounted for 39% of all gifts in 1996, included items such as flowers, clothing and toys. The proportion of households receiving non-monetary gifts declined from a national average of 67% in 1969 to 51% in 1996.

Charitable contributions to organizations

- The proportion of households that contributed to charitable organizations declined from 78% in 1969 to 73% by 1997. Averaged over all households, charitable contributions stood at \$428 in 1997.
- Over the same period, charitable contributions as a proportion of total household giving also fell, from 38% to 24%. This was due mostly to a marked drop in donations to religious organizations, from 28% to 15% of total giving and from 74% to 64% of total charitable contributions. Both the incidence of donating to religious organizations and the total amount donated to them has declined.
- Contributions to charitable organizations accounted for 1.2% of households' disposable income in 1969; after declining to a low of 0.8% in 1978, the proportion returned to 1.2% in 1997.

CST Average annual expenditures on gifts and contributions, all households, Canada



* Includes spousal and child support payments.
Source: Statistics Canada, Family Expenditure Survey, 1996.

Average annual giving, all households, Canada

Constant 1996 \$



Source: Statistics Canada, Family Expenditure Survey, 1969 to 1996.

Total giving as a % of disposable income, all households, Canada

% of disposable income



Source: Statistics Canada, Family Expenditure Survey, 1969 to 1996.



Highest and lowest income quintile households

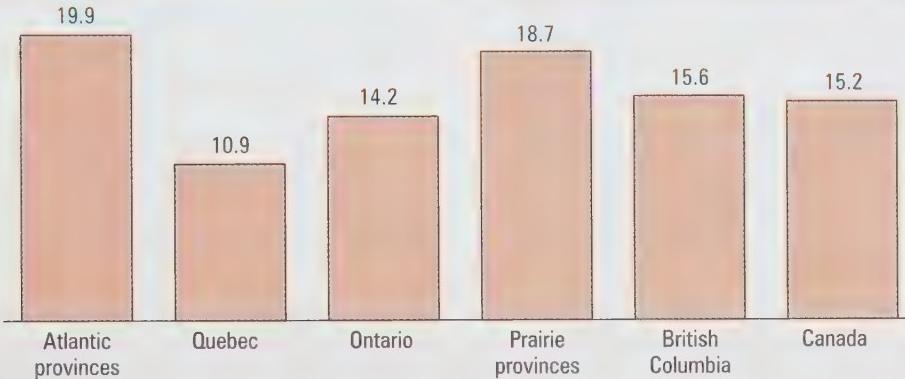
- In 1996, 96% of households in the highest income quintile reported giving and donating, compared with 72% in the lowest quintile.

However, those households in the lowest quintile that did contribute spent an average of 6.8% of disposable income on those gifts and donations in 1996; the highest quintile spent 4.5%.

- The percentage of disposable income spent on gifts and donations declined for all income quintiles between 1969 and 1978 but has been rising since then. Not surprisingly, the rate of giving has shown more variability for lowest-income quintile households than for those in the highest quintile.

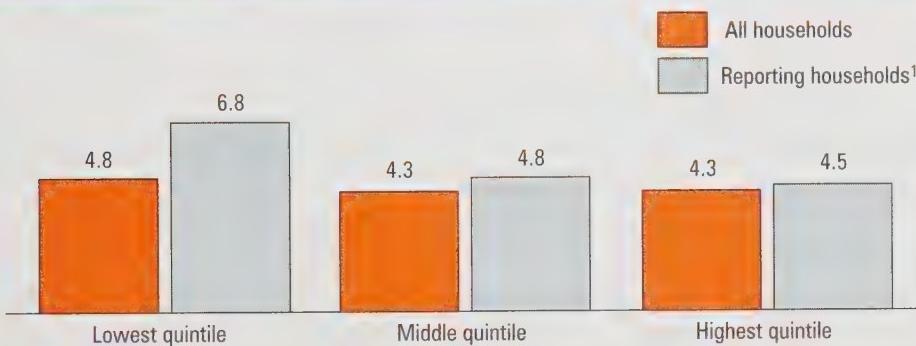


Religious contributions as a % of total giving, all households



Source: Statistics Canada, Family Expenditure Survey, 1996.

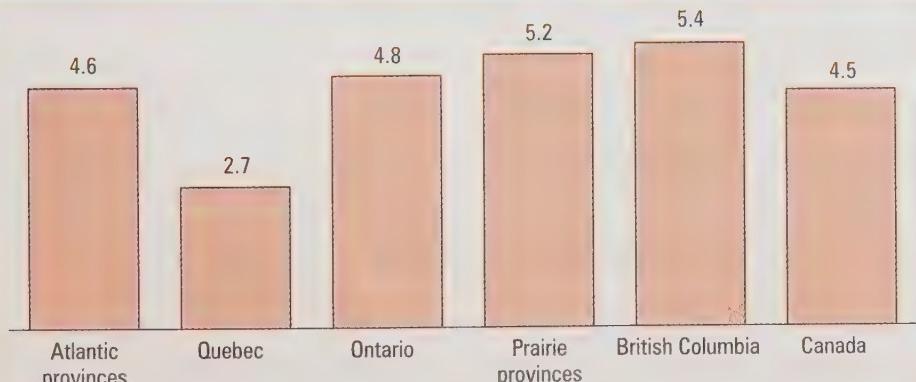
Total giving as % of disposable income, by income quintiles



1. Includes only those households that reported expenditures on giving.

Source: Statistics Canada, Family Expenditure Survey, 1996.

Total giving as % of disposable income, all households



Source: Statistics Canada, Family Expenditure Survey, 1996.

Distinctive regional patterns

- The percentage of households that give to individuals and charitable organizations varies across the country. In 1996, the highest incidence of giving was reported in the Atlantic and the Prairie provinces (over 93%), and the lowest was recorded in Quebec (74%).
- Expenditures on giving as a percentage of disposable income were close to the national average of 4.5% in the Atlantic Provinces and Ontario. Notable divergence from the national average was recorded in Quebec (where the proportion was 2.7%), the Prairie provinces (5.2%) and British Columbia (5.4%).
- Donations to religious organizations as a proportion of total giving were highest among Atlantic households at 20% and lowest in Quebec at 11%.
- In 1996, the value of non-monetary gifts, as estimated by the recipients, averaged \$379 for all Canadian households; it was \$239 for Quebec, and it ranged from \$408 to \$455 for all other regions.



Paul Reed is Senior Social Scientist in the National Accounts and Analytical Studies Field, Statistics Canada and Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University.

Mobile homes in Canada

by Frances Kremerik and Cara Williams

Have you ever been zooming down a highway only to come upon the taillights of a police vehicle providing a safety buffer behind an extra wide load carrying a mobile home? As you slow down, do you ever wonder where the mobile is going or who lives in a mobile home? Perhaps you think back to the first time that you saw a mobile on a highway or local road. Maybe you just wonder why they are called 'mobiles' when they have to be transported by another vehicle at such slow speeds.



What you should know about this study

This article is based on data from the 1996 Census of Population. In addition to responding to general socio-economic questions (such as age, educational attainment, and labour force status), each household was asked about the state of repairs required to their dwelling as well as other dwelling features such as the number of rooms and the number of bedrooms. Information on housing type was recorded by the census enumerators.

Mobile home or mobile: a single dwelling, designed and constructed to be transported on its own chassis and capable of being moved to a new location on short notice. It may be placed temporarily on a foundation such as blocks, posts or a prepared pad which may be converted by a skirt. If placed on a permanent foundation, it is considered (for census purposes) to be a single detached dwelling.

Urban: an urban area is an area that has attained a population concentration of at least 1,000 and a population density of at least 400 per square kilometre.

Small town: an urban area that has a population of less than 30,000.

Rural: areas that lie outside urban areas.

Rural farm residents: members of rural farm operator households who live on their farm for any length of time during the 12-month period prior to the census.

Rural non-farm residents: people who live in rural areas that are not classified as being farms.



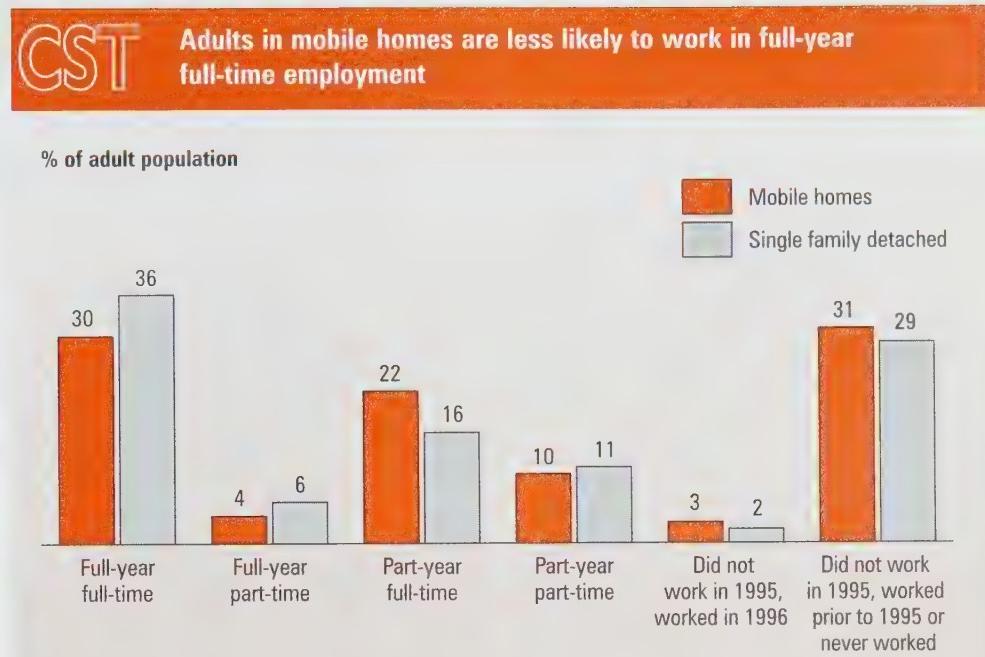
Built on a chassis, mobile homes and travel trailers were synonymous until about 1960 — both were trailers that were also private dwellings. At about this time, the industry restructured and since then a distinction has been made between the trailer used for camping (the travel trailer or recreation vehicle) and the trailer used as a house. While travelers can pull their trailers from campground to campground, once a mobile home has been placed on a site, it often remains rooted.

This article examines the characteristics of people living in mobile homes, with special emphasis on the differences between rural and urban households. Because mobiles are single family homes with a chassis instead of a foundation, mobile home households are compared to those residing in single family detached dwellings.

Over hill, over dale...

In 1996, there were more than 150,000 mobile homes in Canada, representing about 1% of total private dwellings. Although they are not as common as other types of housing, they can be found in every province and territory. In 1996, British Columbia and Alberta accounted for almost half (48%) of mobile homes in Canada. Mobile homes represented 3% of occupied dwellings in BC and 4% in Alberta. In other provinces, usage varied widely from Newfoundland, where they made up less than 1% of all dwellings, to the Yukon and Northwest Territories, where they accounted for 9% and 8%, respectively.¹

Mobile homes are both a rural and an urban phenomenon. Indeed, over half (57%) of all mobile homes in Canada are located in rural areas (both farms and non-farms) and another 22% are in towns and small cities with populations under 30,000. These figures are not surprising. In



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population.

rural areas mobile homes can be a low-cost and low-maintenance retirement home for seniors; on farms they may represent an easily installed farmhouse or additional living quarters. In smaller urban areas, mobile homes allow for the fast expansion of housing stock in economic boom times; for example, more than 70% of the mobiles in the Yukon are in small towns. For the most part, however, mobile homes are restricted in many large urban centres by municipal by-laws.

Nearly half of mobile home residents are younger than 30

In general, the age structure of people living in mobile homes is similar to that of people living in single detached houses. In 1996, 45% of mobile home residents were under 30 compared with 41% of single family home occupants. Seniors 65 and older made up 10% of the population in mobiles and 11% of residents in single detached homes.

The family structure of households in mobile homes does, however, differ from that of people in single detached houses. Mobile homes are almost

twice as likely to house only one individual than are single homes: 24% versus 14% respectively. This is to be expected as mobile homes are generally less costly to own and maintain, and one-person households generally have lower incomes than other types of households. The lower cost may also be an attraction for lone-parent families who made up 10% of households in mobile homes compared with 8% in single family homes.

Couples with one child are almost as likely to be found in a mobile home as in a single detached home, at 13% and 15% respectively. However, larger families are clearly more comfortable in bigger houses. For example, two-parent families with two or more children account for 31% of single detached households, but only 19% of mobile households. The one exception occurs on farms, where

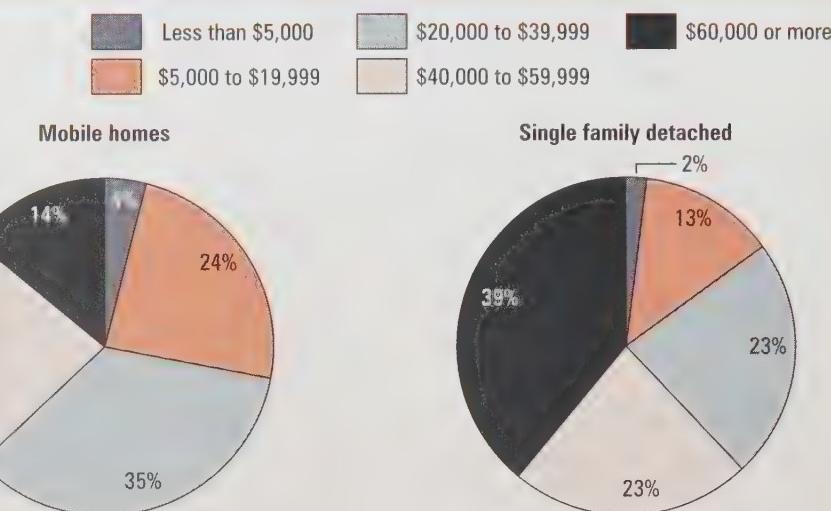
1. Since these data are from the 1996 Census, the Northwest Territories in this article includes both the current Northwest Territories and Nunavut, which did not become a separate territory until April 1, 1999.

larger families are equally likely to live in mobile homes and single family dwellings.

Since they are built to be moveable, mobile homes are smaller than conventional single family dwellings: nearly all mobiles (94%) have between 4 and 6 rooms, while close to half of single detached homes have between 7 and 9 rooms. Although mobile homes tend to house single people and smaller families, they are more likely to be somewhat crowded. Ten percent of mobiles have a crowding index² of 1.0 or higher, compared with 3% of single family dwellings. Crowding is even more common in rural farm areas (22%) where mobiles are more likely to house families with two or more children.

Lower income and education common among mobile home residents
 One-half of all Canadians in mobile homes, compared with 36% of those in single family dwellings, had not completed their high school education;³ mobile residents were also much less likely to have finished a university diploma or degree (4% versus 15%). This difference in educational attainment is smaller in rural than in urban areas. While half of mobile home residents in rural areas have not completed their secondary education, neither have 44% of single family detached dwellers. In urban areas, however, figures for less than high school completion are 50% for mobile residents compared with 33% for dwellers in single detached homes. Differences in post-secondary attainment are also quite noticeable in urban areas; only 2% of mobile residents have obtained a bachelor's or higher degree, while almost 16% of single detached dwellers have done so.

Being without higher educational qualifications usually affects a person's employment profile.⁴ In 1996, 30% of mobile home residents were



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population.

employed full-time full-year (49 to 52 weeks); another 22% had worked full-time but had not been employed year-round. In contrast, 36% of adults in single family homes worked full-time full-year and only 16% were full-time workers without full-year employment.

Nevertheless, the majority of mobile home residents (60%) reported wages as their major source of income; this was similar to the rate for households in single family dwellings (63%). On the other hand, 28% of households living in mobile homes stated that government transfers were the major component of their income, compared with 20% of single family households.

Mobile home residents had lower household income than those in single detached houses. Almost one quarter of households in mobiles had an annual income between \$5,000 and \$20,000 in 1995; this represents nearly twice the proportion of those living in single family dwellings. While 35% of mobile home households reported an income between \$20,000 and \$40,000, nearly the same proportion (39%) of households in

single family dwellings had incomes of \$60,000 or more.

This income disparity was most evident in urban areas; 45% of single family households had incomes of \$60,000 or more compared with 15% of mobile home dwellers. Similarly, 27% of urban mobile households reported an income under \$20,000 while only 12% of single detached households were in the same situation. The income gap was not as wide in rural areas, where 29% of mobile and 21% of single detached households had incomes under \$20,000; incomes over \$60,000 were reported by 13% of mobile and 27% of single home residents.

2. The crowding index is the number of persons per room. Bathrooms, kitchens, and closets are not included in the number of rooms.
3. Population numbers and rates used for highest academic achievement refer only to Canadians who are 15 years of age or older.
4. Crompton, S. 1995. "Employment prospects for high school graduates." *Perspectives on Labour and Income* 7, 3: 8-13.

| | Total | Rural % | Urban |
|----------------------------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Mobile homes | | | |
| Couple with no children | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| Couple with one child | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| Couple with two or more children | 19 | 21 | 16 |
| Lone-parent families | 10 | 9 | 12 |
| One-person households | 24 | 24 | 25 |
| Other | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Single family detached | | | |
| Couple with no children | 27 | 30 | 27 |
| Couple with one child | 15 | 15 | 16 |
| Couple with two or more children | 31 | 30 | 32 |
| Lone-parent families | 7 | 7 | 8 |
| One-person households | 14 | 15 | 13 |
| Other | 6 | 3 | 4 |

Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population.

homes versus 7% of urban ones needed major repairs.

Summary

More than half of all mobile homes are in rural areas, and they can be seen in every province and territory. Almost half are home to small families, and another quarter house a single individual. The majority of mobile households rely on wages as their major source of income, but many residents are not employed full-time year-round. Mobile homes are in greater need of major repair than single detached dwellings, but they are nonetheless an alternative option for people seeking home ownership. When someone says "home" the word conjures up different meanings for different people. For 380,000 Canadians, home is a mobile.

5. Shelter costs include payments for electricity, oil, gas, coal, wood or other fuels, water and other municipal services, monthly mortgage payments, and property taxes (municipal and school).

A place to call home

Many people want to own their homes, no matter how modest their income and for some, mobile homes make a good choice. They are cheaper than more conventional housing: the average value of mobile homes in 1995 was about \$43,500, less than one-third that of a single detached home. Lower priced mobile homes provide persons who might not otherwise be able to afford to purchase a home with a low-cost ownership alternative. Some 77% of mobile homes were owner-occupied, compared with 87% of single family homes.

In addition, mobile homes have lower shelter costs thus contributing to their affordability.⁵ While only 8% of single detached owner-occupied households have monthly shelter costs of less than \$200, 34% of mobile

dwellers did. At the other end of the scale, 27% of single detached homeowners spent \$1,000 or more every month on shelter costs compared with only 5% of mobile owners. Approximately 85% of all homeowners, mobile and single detached, spent less than 30% of their income on shelter.

The construction techniques that make mobiles portable may contribute to their need for repairs, which is considerably higher than that of single homes. In 1996, most mobile homes were in good condition and required only minor repairs or regular maintenance. However, 14% needed major repairs, compared with 9% of single detached homes. Mobile homes in rural areas were moderately more likely to need major repairs than those in urban sites (15% versus 12%); the same pattern applied to single detached dwellings: 12% of rural



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Asset versus debt

The average Canadian owed \$16 for every \$100 of assets they owned in 1999. But lone-parent families maintained much higher debt burdens overall (\$29 per \$100), and two-parent families with children owed \$23. Single senior women had the lowest debt to asset ratio at \$1 per \$100 and persons under 25 in families who didn't own their own home had the highest at \$53.

The median net worth of Canada's families was \$81,000 in 1999. This is the amount left over when all assets are sold and all debts are paid. Families headed by seniors held the highest median net worth at \$202,000, largely because their homes were mortgage-free. Single men under 65 had the lowest net worth, at \$11,200. Key factors in determining net worth are education, occupation, age, income and the number of earners in the family.

Income Statistics Division

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13F0041XDB, 13F0042XDB*



Smoke signals

As of June 2000, there were 6 million people (15 years and over) who have quit smoking and 5.9 million who smoked daily or

occasionally. The highest incidence of smoking occurred among people aged 20 to 24: 35% of men and 30% of women. Teenagers aged 15 to 19 were the next most frequent group of smokers, at about 26%.

In provinces where the taxes on, and the prices of, cigarettes were higher (the Western provinces and Newfoundland), people smoked between 14 to 16 cigarettes a day. In provinces with lower taxes and prices, consumption averaged around 18 cigarettes a day.

British Columbia had the lowest average use at 14 cigarettes a day while New Brunswick registered the highest, at 18.

Special Surveys Division

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Lure of the city

All provinces lost youth from their rural areas between 1971 and 1996. The greatest loss occurred in Saskatchewan and in the four Atlantic provinces, particularly in Newfoundland and in Prince Edward Island. The provinces with the smallest loss of rural youth were Alberta and British Columbia.

Urban areas gained youth in all provinces except in the Atlantic provinces. Urban areas in Alberta recorded the largest gains. In the Atlantic provinces, urban areas lost youth in Newfoundland and in Prince Edward Island, but only in some age groups. In Nova Scotia

and New Brunswick, the urban youth population appeared stable.

Agriculture Division

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Catalogue no. 21-006-XIE



Reading and writing

International adult literacy skills in 22 countries have been measured using prose, document and quantitative literacy by the International Adult Literacy Survey between 1994 and 1998. Canadian adult literacy is rated below those in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands but is at the same level as literacy rates in the United States, Australia and Germany.

Comparisons between literacy rates in Canada and the United States show that the bottom quarter of Canadians score higher than the bottom quarter of Americans, but that the top quarter of Canadians score lower than the top quarter of Americans.

The study findings confirm that low literacy rates are of concern in all regions and countries. Some proposed tools for improving literacy outcomes for North America include: life-long learning, early childhood education and care programs, improvements to the quality of education, reducing inequality in schooling, improvements to adult education access, promoting literacy-rich environments at work, at home and in the community, and improving access to information and communication technology.

Culture, Tourism, and the Centre for Education Statistics

*T. Scott Murray
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89-572-XPE*



Net catch

Internet use has risen from 18% of the population age 15 and over in 1994 to 53% in 2000. Women, francophones and rural residents were less likely to use the net than men, anglophones and urban dwellers. Overall, Internet users tend to be younger, and have higher income and education levels than non-users. Nine out of 10 teenagers aged 15 to 19 reported using the Internet at some time in the past 12 months, the highest proportion of any age group. Internet use declined steadily for each subsequent age group. Individuals with household incomes of \$80,000 used the Internet much more frequently than those with household incomes of less than \$20,000, at 81% and 30% respectively. Persons 20 and older with a university education were much more likely to use the Internet (79%) than persons with less than high school diplomas (13%).

Housing, Family, and Social Statistics Division

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56-505-XIE*

SOCIAL INDICATORS

| | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|---|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|-------|
| ECONOMY* | | | | | | | | |
| Annual % change | | | | | | | | |
| Gross Domestic Product ¹ | 2.3 | 4.7 | 2.8 | 1.5 | 4.4 | 3.3 | 4.5 | 4.7 |
| Wages, salaries and SLI | 1.8 | 2.6 | 3.4 | 2.4 | 5.7 | 4.7 | 5.1 | 7.2 |
| Expenditures on goods and services ¹ | 1.8 | 3.1 | 2.1 | 2.5 | 4.4 | 2.9 | 3.5 | 4.0 |
| Consumer Price Index | 1.8 | 0.2 | 2.2 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 0.9 | 1.7 | -- |
| Saving rate (%) | 11.9 | 9.4 | 9.2 | 7.0 | 4.7 | 4.5 | 3.6 | 3.2 |
| Prime lending rate | 5.94 | 6.88 | 8.65 | 6.06 | 4.96 | 6.60 | 6.44 | 7.27 |
| 5-year mortgage rate | 8.78 | 9.53 | 9.16 | 7.93 | 7.07 | 6.93 | 7.56 | 8.35 |
| Exchange rate (with U.S.dollar) | 1.290 | 1.366 | 1.372 | 1.364 | 1.385 | 1.484 | 1.486 | 1.485 |
| ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | | | |
| Average Annual Air Pollution | | | | | | | | |
| Ozone ² (over one hour) | 86 | 92 | 94 | 89 | 90 | -- | -- | -- |
| Total suspended particulates ² (over eight hours) | 51 | 50 | 51 | 50 | 53 | -- | -- | -- |
| <i>Government Pollution Abatement and Control (PAC) Expenditures</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Sewage disposal as a % of total | | | | | | | | |
| PAC expenditures | 42.9 | 42.3 | 48.5 | 48.4 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Waste disposal as a % of total PAC expenditures | 26.4 | 29.0 | 24.2 | 24.7 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Billions of public transit passengers | 1.38 | 1.35 | 1.39 | 1.37 | 1.40 | 1.43 | 1.43 | -- |
| Total consumption of refined petroleum products ³ used for transportation (thousand m ³) | 46,545 | 49,115 | 49,596 | 51,062 | 52,574 | 54,182 | 55,838 | -- |
| JUSTICE | | | | | | | | |
| Rate per 100,000 population ⁴ | | | | | | | | |
| Total Criminal Code offences | 9,531 | 9,114 | 8,993 | 8,914 | 8,453 | 8,137 | 7,733 | -- |
| Property offences | 5,571 | 5,250 | 5,283 | 5,264 | 4,867 | 4,556 | 4,266 | -- |
| Violent offences | 1,081 | 1,046 | 1,007 | 1,000 | 990 | 979 | 955 | -- |
| Other Criminal Code offences | 2,879 | 2,817 | 2,702 | 2,650 | 2,596 | 2,602 | 2,512 | -- |
| Average days to process case through courts | | | | | | | | |
| Adults | -- | 135 | 141 | 148 | 157 | 150 | -- | -- |
| Youths ⁵ | 112 | 111 | 118 | 117 | 105 | 107 | -- | -- |
| Average length of sentence per case | | | | | | | | |
| Adults (days in prison)** | -- | 116 | 122 | 126 | 129 | 137 | -- | -- |
| Youths (days of open and secure custody) | 92 | 88 | 82 | 79 | 74 | 75 | -- | -- |
| CIVIC SOCIETY | | | | | | | | |
| Voter turnout in federal elections | 69.6 | -- | -- | -- | 67.0 | -- | -- | 61.2 |
| % of eligible foreign-born holding citizenship | -- | -- | -- | 83 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Attendance at heritage institutions('000) ⁶ | 108,194 | 111,236 | -- | 112,965 | -- | 114,064 | -- | -- |
| Government expenditures on culture (million\$) ^{7***} | 5,492 | 5,37 | 5,318 | 5,241 | 5,054 | 4,910 | 5,021 | -- |
| % attending religious services at least several times a year | 52.9 | 54.2 | 50.9 | 49.7 | 53.7 | 52.9 | 52.0 | -- |
| % of taxfilers making charitable donations | 28 | 27 | 51 | 27 | 26 | 26 | 26 | -- |
| Average amount of charitable donations (current dollars) | 610 | 634 | 647 | 728 | 808 | 860 | 899 | -- |

-- Data not available.

1. Data in 1992 dollars.

2. % of National Ambient Air Quality Objectives (NAAQO) maximum acceptable levels.

3. Refined petroleum products refers to diesel oils, light heating oils, residual fuel oils, aviation gasoline, fuel for gas turbines and motor fuel.

4. Revised rates based on updated population estimates.

5. Alberta is excluded due to the imputation methodology on date fields thereby making an accurate calculation of a case processing time impossible.

6. Includes only not-for-profit institutions that have an educational and/or interpretive components: nature parks, historic sites, museums, archives and other institutions.

7. Excludes intergovernmental transfers. Data in 1990 dollars. Municipal spending is on a calendar year basis.

* National Income and Expenditure Accounts (cat. no. 13-001-PPB)

** Adult Criminal Court Statistics (cat. no. 85-002-XIE)

*** Government Expenditures on Culture (cat. no. 87F0001XPB)

EDUCATORS' NOTEBOOK

Suggestions for using Canadian Social Trends in the classroom

Lesson plan for "Kids and teens on the Net"

Objectives

- To examine what types of children have home access to the Internet and what they use it for
- To discuss concerns about risks
- To discuss how the Internet has changed lives.

Method

1. Take a quick poll of the class to determine what proportion of the group uses the Internet at home? What proportion uses the Net at locations other than school or home? In an average day how much time do they spend on the Internet?
2. What are the impediments to using the Internet at home?
3. Statistics show that there is a digital divide in Internet access where children from lower-income families are less likely to have access at home. Does access at school and public libraries compensate for no access at home? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of access from home, school, and libraries.
4. Discuss if boys' and girls' Internet use differs and, if yes, how.
5. Do parents monitor children's use of the Net while at home? Do parents influence this use?
6. Poll the class to determine what proportion have come across Internet content that promoted hate or violence. How did they deal with this situation? Discuss what would be a suitable response.
7. Discuss privacy and security concerns about using the Internet. Has anyone discussed these issues with you? (parent, teacher, librarian, etc.)
8. Discuss how the Internet has changed your life. How has it affected the time you spend on other activities, your schooling, interaction with others and your mental and physical health?

Using other resources

- For other lesson plans for Social Studies courses, check out the Statistics Canada Web site, <http://www.statcan.ca> under Education Resources. Select Teaching resources, then Lesson plans. There are more than 120 lessons available, listed by level and subject. E-STAT, is now free to Canadian education institutions at <http://estat.statcan.ca>. Students may now access E-STAT from home. Please ask the person responsible at your school for the User Name and Password for E-STAT. To check if your school has already registered for E-STAT visit <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Estat/licence.htm>. If your school is not a member, please ask your licence administrator to visit the licence site above.

Share your ideas!

Would you like to share your lessons using *CST* with other educators? Send us your ideas and we will send you lessons using *CST* received from other educators. For further information, contact your regional Statistics Canada education representative at 1 800 263-1136 or Joel Yan, Education Resources Team, Statistics Canada, Ottawa ON K1A 0T6, 1 800 465-1222 fax (613) 951-4513 or Internet e-mail yanjoel@statcan.ca. Details on regional education support are available at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/edu/reps-tea.htm>.

Educators

You may photocopy "Educators' Notebook" and any item or article in *Canadian Social Trends* for use in your classroom.



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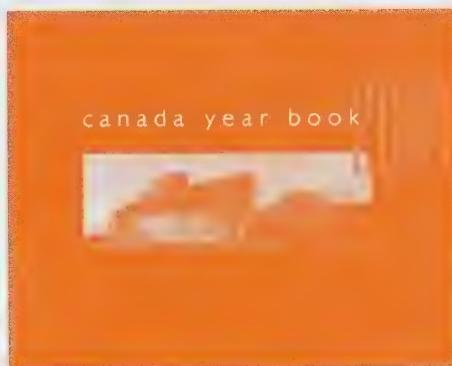
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Canadians in the spotlight



Plugged into the Internet

By Paul Dickinson and Jonathan Ellison

How many Canadians are "plugged into" the Internet? What do they do online? These are the questions Statistics Canada's latest household survey is addressing. This article presents some highlights from the latest survey, which took place in October 1997. The survey also provides a look at the latest trends in Canadian households' use of computers.

Another important source of information on computer use is the Household Internet Use Survey (HUIS), which has been conducted annually since 1993.

In 1997, many people began getting on the Internet from their homes. People were not alone in this trend. The number of households in Canada that had at least one computer in the home increased from 1992 to 1997. Households' incomes, education levels and age all contribute to computer ownership.

For example, in 1997, 30% of households with incomes of \$50,000 or more had at least one computer in the home, compared with 10% of households with incomes of less than \$10,000.

E-mail was popular for the Internet in 1997.

Although about 1 in 4 households used e-mail in 1996, 40% of households plugged into the Internet in 1997.

Households stating that they had used computer computers had risen from 30% in 1996 to 38% in 1997.

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"Connected to the Internet, still connected to life?"**Cover Illustrator**

Born in Brockville, Ontario, **David Badour** graduated from Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology with a diploma in interpretive illustration. He has specialized in illustration and graphic design, preparing artwork for various media including print, Web and broadcast. David has taught classes at Ottawa School of Art in both traditional and digital media. He now resides in Ottawa, working freelance for various multimedia, publishing and animation companies.

Internet use on the cusp of the 21st century



In 1997, Statistics Canada began to collect data on Internet use in the Household Internet Use Survey (HIUS). The data have been very valuable, especially now that a portrait of change over time is emerging (results of the fourth HIUS were released in July 2001), but the information remains limited because it is collected at the household level only. For instance, we know that in 2000 about 60% of Canadian households had at least one person who used the Internet, up 22% from 1999; however, we don't know which household members were the users, or even how many there were.

In 2000, Statistics Canada addressed this data gap by collecting, for the first time, detailed information about the individual's use of technology. With Cycle 14 of the General Social Survey (GSS) on access to and use of information communication technology, researchers are able to focus on personal use of computers and the Internet, people's opinions about the impact of technology on privacy and security, access to information and social networks, and other issues.

Since the three Internet articles that follow share the same data source, information regarding data use and limitations is presented here once, instead of being repeated in each article.

What you should know about the next three studies

The GSS is an annual telephone sample survey covering the population aged 15 and over living in private households in all provinces. Data were collected over a 12-month period from January to December 2000 from almost 25,100 respondents. Respondents were identified as *Internet users* if they had used the Internet at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. "Wired young Canadians" draws on the data collected from just under 3,300 respondents

aged 15 to 24, representing 4.1 million young Canadians (85% of whom are Internet users); "Older surfers" is based on a sample of about 6,200 persons aged 60 and over, representing 4.9 million older Canadians (13% of whom are users); "Connected to the Internet, still connected to life?" uses the full sample of the adult population, that is, almost 25,100 respondents representing almost 24.6 million Canadians aged 15 and over (53% of whom use the Internet).

Some basic background information

Just as the data source is common to each article, so there are some basic characteristics common to most Internet users that do not need to be revisited in each article. The principal characteristic is the well-documented fact that Internet use is greatly influenced by the socio-economic status of the household; that is, households with higher incomes and higher levels of education are much more likely to own a computer and use the Internet.¹ For example, only 30% of individuals with household incomes under \$20,000 in 2000 had used the Internet in the previous year, compared with 81% of individuals in households where annual income exceeded \$80,000. An even more substantial gap exists in usage rates by educational level: 13% of adults aged 20 and over with less than a high school diploma used the Internet, whereas 79% of those with a university degree did so.

Another important characteristic of Internet users relates to age: young

people are far more enthusiastic surfers than people in their 60s or 70s. As well, the income-connectivity gap is much wider for older than for younger adults. For example, among 15- to 24-year-olds, Internet use increased from 77% of those with household incomes under \$20,000 to 94% of those with household income over \$100,000. However, a much more dramatic contrast can be found among 55- to 64-year-olds, where the rate of Internet use increased almost ten-fold from 8% for those with the lowest income to 77% for those with the highest.

— Ed.

1. For more information, see "General Social Survey: Internet Use, 2000." *The Daily*, March 26, 2001. <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010326/d010326a.htm> and "Household Internet Use Survey, 2000." *The Daily*, July 26, 2001. <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010726/d010726a.htm>.

Wired young Canadians

by Michelle Rotermann

Young people today can access vast volumes of information and visit new worlds, at a click of a mouse. Using electronic mail (e-mail), they can interact with anyone, anywhere, quickly, conveniently and at low cost. Parents often worry

about whether the Internet is a blessing or a curse. They wonder if it is an advantage of growing up in the 21st century or if it distracts from more healthy pursuits, encourages social isolation and exposes users to offensive material.

Using data from the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS), this article examines access to and use of the Internet by young Canadians aged 15 to 24. It explores their motivations and their concerns about security and privacy. The article also investigates where



Young people with home Internet access are more likely to use the Net from all locations...

| | All | Home | School | Work | Other ¹ |
|---|-----|------|--------|------|--------------------|
| % aged 15-24 who used the Net in the last month | | | | | |
| Total | 85 | 56 | 42 | 21 | 53 |
| With home access | 97 | 97 | 52 | 25 | 57 |
| No home access | 69 | n.a. | 29 | 16 | 49 |

... and young adults spend more time on the Net than teens

| | All | Home | School | Work | Other |
|-------------------------------------|-----|------|--------|------|-------|
| Average hours on Internet last week | | | | | |
| 15-24 | 9.3 | 9.1 | 3.1 | 7.5 | 1.9 |
| 15-17 | 8.8 | 9.3 | 2.2 | 5.0 | 1.8 |
| 18-19 | 9.2 | 9.5 | 3.3 | 6.8 | 2.1 |
| 20-24 | 9.8 | 8.8 | 4.2 | 7.6 | 1.9 |

n.a. = not available.

1. "Other" refers to friends' and relatives' homes, libraries, Internet cafés and other public access points.

Note: Each column refers to a different sub-population and so cannot be added to get average total hours of use from all locations.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

Internet access occurs and how location may influence its use.

Who uses the Net?

The most "connected" young Canadians are teens between 15 and 17 years: 92% of them used the Internet at least once during the year 1999-2000. Internet use declines for each successive age group, to 86% of 18- to 19-year-olds and 79% of 20- to 24-year-olds. In general, men and women aged 15 to 19 are equally likely to use the Internet; among 20- to 24-year-olds, men (82%) are slightly more likely to do so than women (77%).

Home use most popular

In 2000, 56% of 15- to 24-year-olds (2.3 million) were connected to the Internet at home, making this the most popular point of access, as opposed to school, work and other locations such as friends' and relatives' homes, libraries, Internet cafés and other public access points. Almost half (45%) who used the Net from home did so every day, whereas daily use was less common from work (22%), school (14%) and other locations (2%).

Connections outside the home gave Internet access to nearly 1.3 million young people who did not have home access. However, those who already had home access were most likely to use the Net in other places as well. For example, 52% of those with a home connection also used the Internet from school, compared with 29% of 15- to 24-year-olds without home access.

Home users surf nearly four times more hours than other users

Young people in "connected" homes averaged 12 hours per week on the Net (about 9 hours from home and 3 hours from other places). In contrast, those without a home connection were online for about 3.4 hours per week. This suggests there are barriers to Net use outside the home. For example,

Internet use from schools, libraries and other locations may be constrained by hours of operation, time limits, waiting lines and geographic location. Pay-per-use Internet cafés often charge by the hour, a constraint that may limit use, while home users may have unlimited access for a monthly fee.

Gender also has a bearing on how much time is spent on the Net. Young men use the Internet for an average of about 11 hours per week, while young women average less than 8 hours. This difference may be due to the way each sex uses the Net. Typically, men report entertainment as a reason for logging on; they are more likely to play games, build Web pages and search for information on topics and products of interest. While young women engage in these types of activities as well, some research suggests they tend to be more goal-oriented

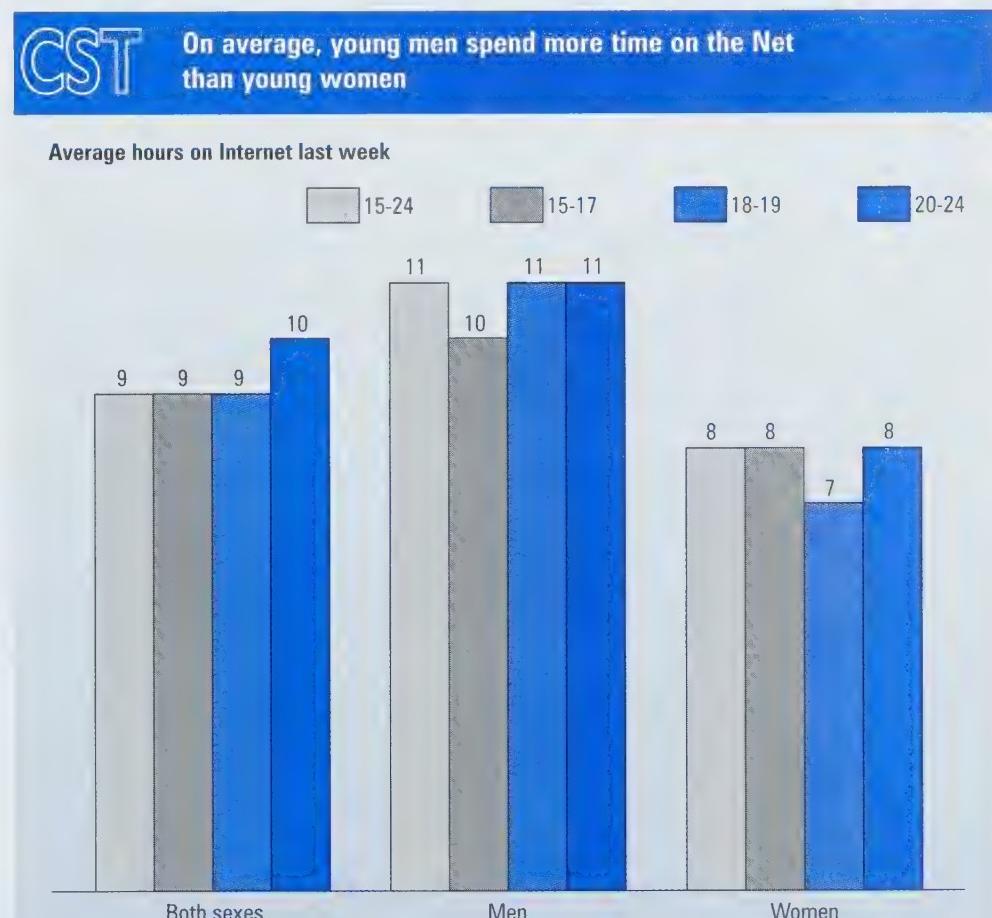
when online;¹ other studies show they are also more likely to use the Internet as a means to communicate and to save time.²

E-mail is the principal Internet activity

E-mail is the most popular Internet activity among Canada's young people (71%), and its rate of use does not vary

1. Media Metrix. September 12, 2000. "Teens Spend Less than Half as Much Time Online as Adults, Jupiter and Media Metrix Research Finds." <http://www.jup.com/company/pressrelease:jsp?doc=pr000912>.

2. Maynard, Rona. January 1997. "Here's to digital women," *Chatelaine Online*. <http://www.chatelaine.com/read/computers/digfem.html>; Shiver, Jube. May 11, 2000. "Internet Gender Gap Closes in U.S., Study Says." *Los Angeles Times*. http://www.latimes.com/news/state/updates/lat_netgap000511.htm



Young people in their twenties use the Internet somewhat differently than teenagers

| Activity | Age | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| | 15-17 | 18-19 | 20-24 |
| | % who used the Net in the last month | | |
| Use e-mail | 72 | 70 | 70 |
| Search for information on goods or services | 60 | 65 | 74 |
| Access online chat services | 71 | 63 | 48 |
| Play games | 65 | 59 | 50 |
| Access online news site | 36 | 49 | 52 |
| Access information on government programs or services | 23 | 36 | 42 |
| Search for medical or health-related information | 28 | 35 | 36 |
| Put up a Web page | 26 | 26 | 20 |
| Purchase goods or services | 11 | 13 | 24 |
| Subscribe to a newsgroup or listserv | 19 | 18 | 15 |
| Do electronic banking | 4 | 9 | 18 |
| Correspond with government departments | 3 | 5 | 5 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

by gender or age. Presumably, young people use e-mail to stay in touch with friends and family, to communicate with teachers, to send and receive documents and to interact with their co-workers and clients. E-mail may also be used to exchange photos, confirm e-commerce orders and subscribe to newsletters and press releases.

Other popular uses of the Internet are to search for information on goods and services (67% of users), to access online chat groups (59%), and to play games (57%). Only about one in 10 young users bank online (11%).

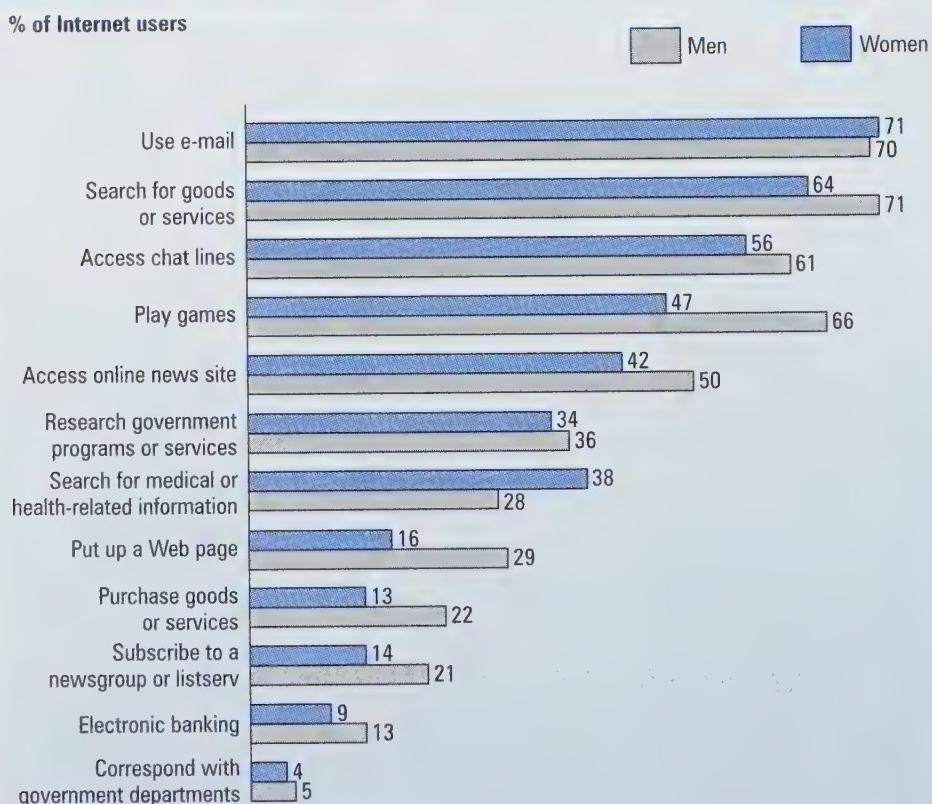
Many young people look for information on goods and services — the equivalent of “window shopping.” Nearly 75% of 20- to 24-year-olds have searched for products and services, but only 24% have purchased something online; the figures for 15- to 19-year-olds are smaller. Teens may be less likely to buy because online shopping requires a credit card and, at some Web sites, parental permission.³

Higher percentages of 15- to 17-year-olds play games than those aged 18 to 24. This suggests that the younger set may be using the Internet for entertainment, while the older group may value it more as a source of information. Regardless of age, young men are considerably more likely to play games than young women (about 66% versus 47%).

Participating in chat rooms is enjoyed equally by 15- to 17-year-olds of both sexes and more by men than women aged 18 to 24. For these young users, chat rooms are places to share elements of youth culture, as well as a place to meet people.

With few exceptions, many of the remaining Internet activities, including

E-mail and looking for goods and services were the most popular activities for young users



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

3. *Business Wire*. June 1, 2000. “Teen Purchasing Power Weak in Online Shopping Arena, PricewaterhouseCoopers’ Survey Reports.”

designing Web pages, joining news groups, and doing online banking, are more popular among men than women across all age brackets. The only online activity more common among women than men is searching for medical and health-related information.

Most young people started to use the Net for personal interest

Young people have grown up surrounded by digital media. Computers are commonplace in many of their homes and at school. Their teachers instruct them to use the Internet for assignments and their friends encourage them to e-mail, chat online, and check out Web sites of their favourite sports teams, performing artists and merchandise.

The majority of young Internet users began using the Net for personal interest (63%). School ranked second as a reason for starting to surf (34%), while work-related reasons were reported by only 2%. Whereas men were more likely to cite personal interests (69% versus 57% of women), women more frequently named school as a reason for beginning to use the Internet (40% versus 28%).

Many concerned about security and privacy but few have encountered problems

Concerns about security and privacy are less widespread among young people than among adults. Seventy-two percent of 25- to 44-year-olds were greatly or somewhat concerned about security when making purchases or banking over the Internet, compared with 60% of 15- to 24-year-olds. Protecting privacy was also a more important issue among older people: 66% compared with 56% among young people. In some cases, these apprehensions may inhibit Internet use. Interestingly, young Internet users are somewhat more anxious about security than non-users.

Quebec has lowest rate of Internet use among young people

Just over three-quarters (77%) of 15- to 24-year-olds in Quebec are Internet users, compared with the national average of 85%. Lower rates of Internet use may be due to francophones' reluctance to use the Net because much of the content is available only in English. According to the General Social Survey (GSS), young francophones are less satisfied than their anglophone counterparts with the provision of content in their mother tongue. Virtually all young anglophones who use the Internet believe that there is enough English whereas only 59% of francophone users feel that there is enough French and most would prefer to access French-language sites.

Language is a challenge for all non-anglophone Internet users, however. A 1997 article in *Scientific American* estimated that 60% of the Internet's host computers are located in the United States and most of these feed English language content to the Net.¹ The Quebec government has taken steps to get more families in the province connected. An initiative entitled "Brancher les familles sur Internet" (Connecting families to the Internet) was implemented May 1, 2000.² This program was implemented after interviews for the 2000 GSS began and therefore its full impact is not reflected in the data.

| | % of young adults using the Internet |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Canada | 85 |
| British Columbia | 92 |
| Ontario | 87 |
| Atlantic Region | 84 |
| Prairies | 83 |
| Quebec | 77 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

1. Oudet, Bruno. March 1997. "Multilingualism on the Internet", *Scientific American*. <http://www.sciam.com/0397issue/0397oudet.html>.
2. The "Brancher les familles sur Internet" initiative has connected more than 284,000 low income families to the Internet and has helped almost 218,000 families to buy or rent a computer as of June 26, 2001. <http://communiques.gouv.qc.ca/gouvqc/communiques/GPQF/Mars2001/05/c0930.html>. <http://www.familles.mic.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/index.htm>.

| | Concerned about security | | | | Concerned about privacy | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | Age 15-24 | | Age 25-44 | | Age 15-24 | | Age 25-44 | |
| | Total | Users | Non-users | Total | Total | Users | Non-users | Total |
| Greatly/somewhat | 60 | 61 | 51 | 72 | 56 | 57 | 50 | 66 |
| Hardly | 8 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 7 |
| Not at all | 26 | 26 | 25 | 15 | 30 | 30 | 28 | 19 |
| No opinion | 6 | 4 | 19 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 16 | 8 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

Although security awareness is widespread, only 8% of 15- to 24-year-olds reported they had experienced problems such as hacker attacks or computer virus infections. Not surprisingly, those who have come across security problems had greater concerns about this issue.

This wariness, however, did not stop young people from meeting and becoming friends with someone online. A surprising 33% of Internet users have met and become friends with people online. Teens aged 15 to 17 were most likely to form online friendships (46%), while 20- to 24-year-olds were least likely to do so (23%). Yet young people were cautious about their online relationships: some 62% of Internet users who had formed an online friendship believed that most people cannot be trusted and that they themselves cannot be too careful.

The possibility of young people accessing or receiving material that is offensive, threatening or inappropriate is one of the most controversial aspects of the Internet. According to the 2000 GSS, there is a very real possibility that the majority of Internet users have come across this type of material.⁴ About 60% of Canadians aged 15 to 24 who use the Net have found Web sites that contain pornography, 24% have come across content that promotes hatred or

violence, and another 10% have received an e-mail that they considered threatening or harassing.

Conclusion

In many respects the Internet is still in its infancy, leaving much to be learned and understood. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: our lives — for better or for worse — have been transformed and these changes are most obvious in the young. They use it to stay in touch, form new relationships, search for information, entertain, and play online games. Youth, some of whom have not known life without computers, will grow up in a surprisingly different society than their parents. However, this is not the first time that new communication technologies have

changed society. In the past, it was the telephone, radio and television; today, it is the Internet.

4. This statement reflects the subjective judgment of the respondent as to what constitutes offensive or inappropriate material.



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WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Older surfers

by Cynthia Silver

This article was adapted from "Internet Use among Older Canadians" by Cynthia Silver, *Connectedness Series*, available on the Statistics Canada Web site at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/56F0004MIE01004.htm>.

Every day, the Internet becomes more embedded in our lives. Business, media and government are embracing it as a way to provide services to their clients and the general public. Schools require children and teens to use it as a research tool and libraries and community centres offer access to those without a home connection.

The 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) shows that nearly every teenager used the Net but that use drops quickly with each successive age group. Older Canadians are much less likely to use the Internet than young people, though their numbers are growing: in doing so, many Canadians aged 60 and over may reduce the impact of social isolation following retirement and the onset of age-related health conditions. Older adults are benefiting from access to networked communities through the Internet.

Using data from the 2000 GSS, this study explores Internet use among Canadians aged 60 and over, specifically, why and how they use it, and how they developed their computer skills. It will also examine barriers to use.

Older people are the fastest growing group of users

Among Canadians aged 60 and over, only 13% (614,000) had used the Internet in the previous year. While equal percentages of boys and girls in their late teens used the Internet, the gender gap emerges with age. Among those aged 60 and over, men were nearly twice as likely (17%) as women (9%) to use the Net.

The GSS asked respondents about Internet use during the previous 12 months; it also asked when they began using the Net. Measuring change over this period, it is clear that use grew fastest among those aged 60 and over from 1999 to 2000.¹ Growth was strongest among older women, 43% of whom had started using the Net in the last year compared with 25% of older men. In contrast, 19% of 15- to 24-year-olds had started online in the previous 12 months.

Older surfers spend less time on the Net than young people

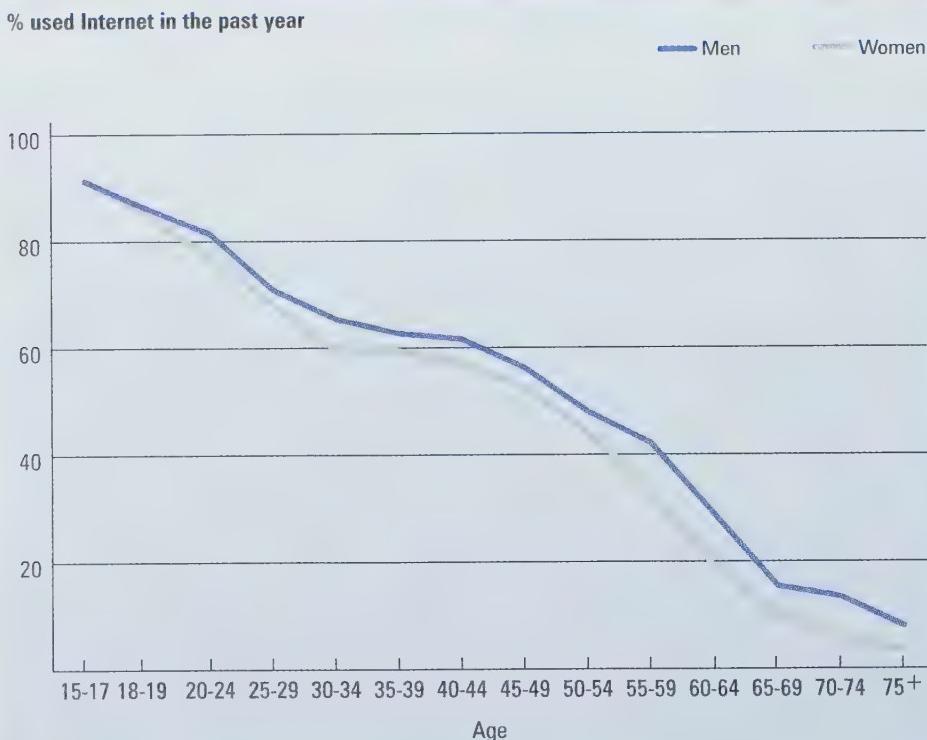
On average, older surfers spent an average of 6 hours per week on the Net, about the same as 45- to 54-year-olds, but considerably less than the nine-hour weekly average of young people aged 15 to 24. Averages do not tell the full story, however, as nearly 30% of older adults spent less than one hour per week online and another 20% over 8 hours online. There was less than an hour's difference in the amount of time older men and women were online each week, in contrast to the two-hour weekly gap between men and women under 60.

Personal interest and entertainment most popular with older surfers

Most older users (80%) go online for personal interest or entertainment. While 32% of men used it for household management such as paying bills or financial planning, only 15% of women surfers had done so in the previous month.

Older Canadians primarily searched for online information on goods and

1. During the 12 months before being interviewed in 2000.



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

services (57% of surfers), news (54%) and health information (38%).² Few older surfers participated in a listserv or newsgroup and chat groups were clearly the preserve of the young.

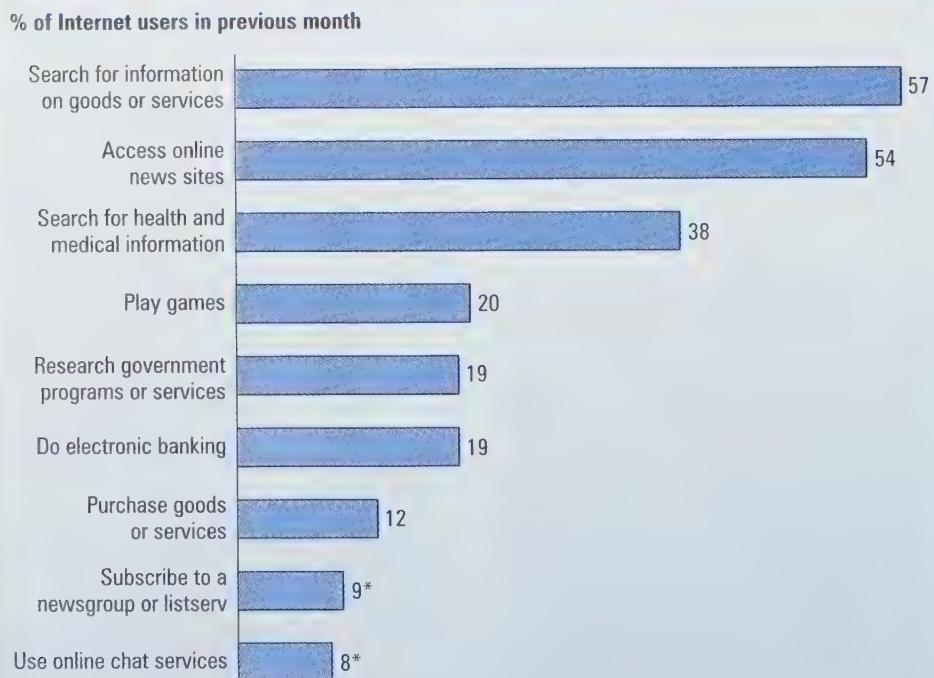
Many older adults have retired or reduced their work time, thus creating more time for leisure activities. It is not surprising that half of older surfers looked for online travel information and 41% looked for information on arts, entertainment or sports. One-third looked for business or economic news, but information on education or work was rarely sought by users aged 60 and over.

E-mail — maintaining ties with family and friends

As people age, they may tend to become socially isolated. A lower income after retirement, declining physical ability and the loss of a spouse are examples of changes that may cause older Canadians to lose touch with people.

However, the Internet seems to be a valuable tool in maintaining contact with others. Nearly all older Internet users (87%) used e-mail and they were sending messages almost as often as younger people: 69% who had used it in the last month did so at least several times a week, as did 76% of those under age 60. Although older people e-mailed their family more often than younger people did, old and young e-mail users were equally likely to stay in touch with friends. And while women have had the traditional role

Adults aged 60 and over look for information on goods and services, online news and health

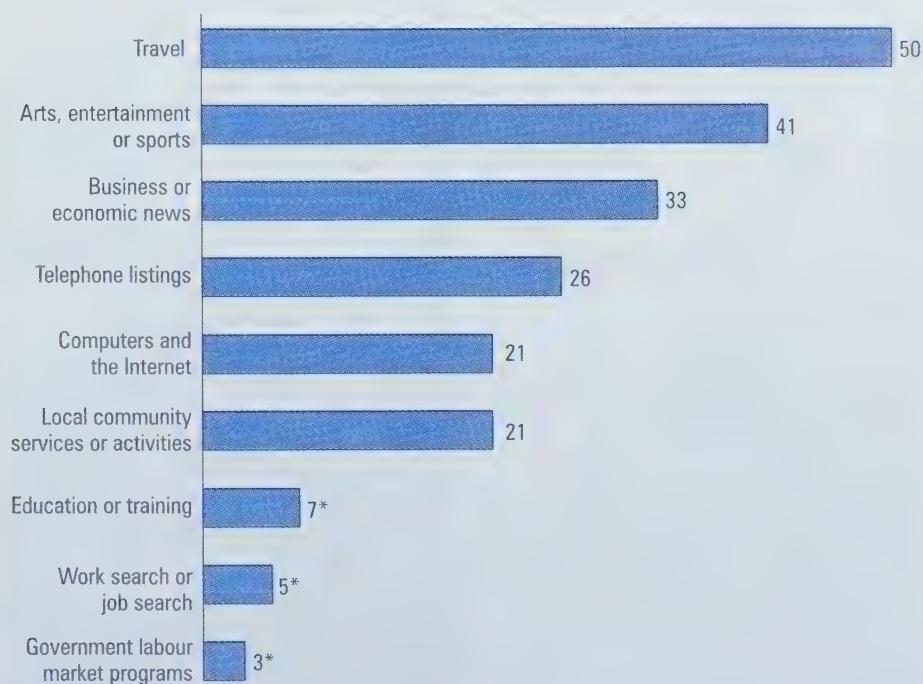


* High sampling variability.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

2. Most of those looking for health information sought information about specific diseases (65%), drugs (27%) or lifestyle information such as diet, exercise or health promotion (23%).
3. A listserv is an electronic mailing list used by a broad range of discussion groups. When users subscribe to a listserv, they receive periodic e-mail messages and can communicate with each other.

% of Internet users in previous month



* High sampling variability.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

of sustaining family relationships, men were just as likely as women to use e-mail to keep in touch.

Apart from a desire to maintain family ties, older e-mail users may communicate more often with family than young people do because they have more surviving children and grandchildren than younger people have surviving parents, grandparents and siblings. In addition, older adults may have more time to stay in touch with their families and friends.

Home connection more popular among older people

Independent living is important to the quality of life of older adults. They have more mobility and transportation problems to deal with, which suggests they have limited access to locations with Internet connections. A home connection therefore offers older adults the opportunity to socialize with others, pursue life-long

learning and participate in community activities. As well, it can assist with activities of daily living such as shopping and managing money. About 84% of older Internet users had a home connection, compared with two-thirds of surfers aged 15 to 34.

Paradoxically, people aged 60 and over are less likely than young people to take advantage of the home connection. Only two-thirds of older Canadians who lived in a connected home used the Net, reflecting situations in which the respondent does not use the Internet but their spouse or children do. In younger families, all members of the household tend to use the Net.

Most older adults used informal methods to acquire computer skills

While younger adults frequently learned their computer skills in school or at work, fewer older people have had recent exposure to these environments.

Of the three main methods of skills acquisition — at work, at school or on one's own — 35% of older users were exclusively self-taught.⁴ Another 17% had taken courses at an educational institution, while 48% of older Internet users had obtained at least some employer-sponsored computer training. Whether or not older users had received workplace training or taken formal educational courses, most had also learned by trial and error, with help from friends or relatives or using informal self-help methods.

First barrier to Internet use may be attitudinal

Among adults aged 60 and over who had never used the Internet, only 8% were interested in doing so, compared with 34% of younger non-users. Just over one-quarter of older Canadians thought that everyone in Canada should have Net access compared with more than half of those aged 15 to 59. This suggests that older adults may be resistant to adopting the Internet, perhaps because they see no important reason to use it.

There are some important barriers to access for older people without home access who are interested in using the Internet but do not. The main barriers cited were access (30%) and cost (26%), but not having enough time (15%) and lack of skills or training (14%) were also important constraints. Fear of technology was not reported as a reason for non-use by people of any age. However, the generally lower levels of education and literacy⁵ among older people are also barriers that may make the acquisition of computer skills more difficult. Diminished physical abilities

4. They used manuals, online help and tutorials, Web-based training, informal help from a friend or relative as well as trial and error to acquire computer skills.

may also inhibit Internet use among older people as eyesight, dexterity and hand-eye coordination tend to deteriorate with age and make it more difficult to work with a keyboard, mouse or computer monitor.

Summary

While Canadians aged 60 and over lag considerably behind younger adults in adopting the Internet, they are the fastest growing group of Internet users. Many older adults use the Internet to connect with family and friends, but they quickly find it a valuable source of information on travel, leisure activities, health and other areas of interest. The Internet may stimulate independent living, help combat isolation, create opportunities for volunteering and make it easier for retirees to earn income without leaving home. The Internet can open the world to older people who may feel isolated and lonely.

Because many older adults are no longer employed, they may need to find other ways to learn the new technology. Many seniors' groups now offer programs to help older adults become familiar with computers and to assist them with Internet access. Very often, though, they use their own ingenuity and learn from the people around them. Since older women are less likely to have developed computer skills in the workplace, having a son, daughter or grandchild with skills may encourage them to get online.

Access to a computer is an important barrier to Internet use among older people. Those who use the Net

are a relative elite, with higher education levels and higher incomes than older people who do not use the Net. Most often, older Internet users rely on their own resources to purchase a computer and get an Internet connection. Since many retired people live on low incomes, family and community resources are also important ramps onto the information highway. Those who do quickly find themselves connected to their community and the world.



Cynthia Silver is a senior analyst with Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

5. In 1994, over half of Canadian seniors scored at the lowest literacy level on the International Adult Literacy Survey. This means that many seniors are restricted in daily activities and often depend on others for help. *Reading the Future: A Portrait of Literacy in Canada*, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 89F0093XIE.

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Connected to the Internet, still connected to life?

by Cara Williams

Over the last decade, the Internet and e-mail have changed the way we communicate at home and at work. These technologies have revolutionized both the manner in which we acquire and absorb information, and the way in which we socialize and are entertained. In 2000, about half of Canadians aged 15 and over had used the Internet in the previous 12 months. Users spent an average of eight hours per week on the Net, although about one in six users were connected more than 15 hours a week.

The Net's pace of growth, coupled with Canadians' quick adoption of it, has raised questions about both the benefits and the costs associated with this technology. The benefits of the Internet are clear — it has allowed increased access to information and enabled cheap and efficient communication around the globe — but it is important to acknowledge that for some people, being on the Internet means time taken away from other activities. This is an important trade-off to being "connected."

One of the greatest concerns to social analysts is that Internet users become isolated from traditional social support networks. An American study published in 2000 found that greater use of the Internet by both adults and teens during the first year of access was associated with a decline in social involvement;¹ another study the same year reported that the more time people spend on the Internet, the more socially isolated they become.² On the other hand, it is

argued that our sense of community is increasingly based on shared interests, rather than geographic proximity; if this is the case, then the Internet clearly supports the establishment of new communities.

The 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) on access to and use of communication technology explicitly asked respondents if using the Internet had increased, reduced or had no effect on the amount of time they dedicated to other activities. This article draws on these data to investigate whether

1. Subrahmanyam, K., R.E. Kraut, P.M. Greenfield and E.F. Gross. 2000. "The Impact of Home Computer Use in Children's Activities and Development," *Children and Computer Technology*, 10, 2: 123-144. <http://www.futureofchildren.org>.
2. Nie, N.H. and L. Erbring. 2000. *Internet and Society — A Preliminary Report*. Stanford Institute for the Quantitative Study of Society.

Internet users spend less time with other people or on other activities.

Time away from some activities... and more time on others

One of the reasons the Internet is so popular is that it facilitates contact between friends and families who live far apart. Although phoning a loved one on another continent can be easy, finding a mutually convenient time to call is usually more difficult. The Internet eradicates time zones, thus improving the ease of communication. According to the 2000 GSS, just over 3% of users devoted more time to visiting or talking with family and almost 5% spent more time with friends because they now had an Internet connection. However, over 7% chose to spend less time socializing with family and 6% less time with friends because they preferred being on the Net.

For the most part, though, Internet users — especially men — were far more likely to cut back on other pursuits before they reduced the time dedicated to friends and family. Watching television was affected most, with over one-quarter of users reporting less television viewing; almost one in six reported reading less. Time spent engaging in leisure activities at home (11%), sleep (11%) and household chores (10%) were also reduced because people preferred to devote the time to their activities on the Net. Interestingly, users aged 55 and over were slightly less likely to displace these other activities than younger adults, perhaps because they have more leisure time, spend less time online or may have more scheduling flexibility.

More hours online means less time with family and friends

The more hours people spend online, the more likely they are to dedicate less time to social activities. About 14% of users spend more than 15 hours



Men were generally more likely than women to trade other activities for time online...

| | Both sexes | Female | Male |
|--|---|--------|------|
| | % of Internet users who decreased time spent... | | |
| Working ¹ | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Doing school work ² | 7 | 6 | 8 |
| Watching TV | 27 | 22 | 31 |
| Reading books or magazines | 15 | 13 | 17 |
| Shopping | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| Sleeping | 11 | 8 | 13 |
| On leisure activities at home | 11 | 9 | 13 |
| With children ³ | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| On household chores | 10 | 10 | 9 |
| Visiting or talking with family | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| Visiting or talking with friends | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| On leisure activities outside the home | 7 | 5 | 8 |

... but all Internet users were most likely to give up watching television and reading rather than other activities.

| | 15-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ |
|----------------------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| | % of Internet users who decreased time spent... | | | | | |
| Watching TV | 28 | 28 | 27 | 25 | 22 | 23 |
| Reading books or magazines | 17 | 15 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 15 |
| Shopping | 10 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 4* | -- |
| Sleeping | 15 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 4* | -- |
| On leisure at home | 12 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 10* | 9* |
| Being with children | -- | -- | 3* | -- | -- | -- |
| Household chores | 12 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 4* | -- |
| Visiting or talking with family | 8 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 4* | -- |
| Visiting or talking with friends | 6 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 3* | -- |
| On leisure outside the home | 9 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 4* | -- |

Note: Figures will not add to 100 because of multiple responses.

* High sampling variability.

-- Sample too small to produce reliable estimate.

1. Employed users only.

2. Users attending school only.

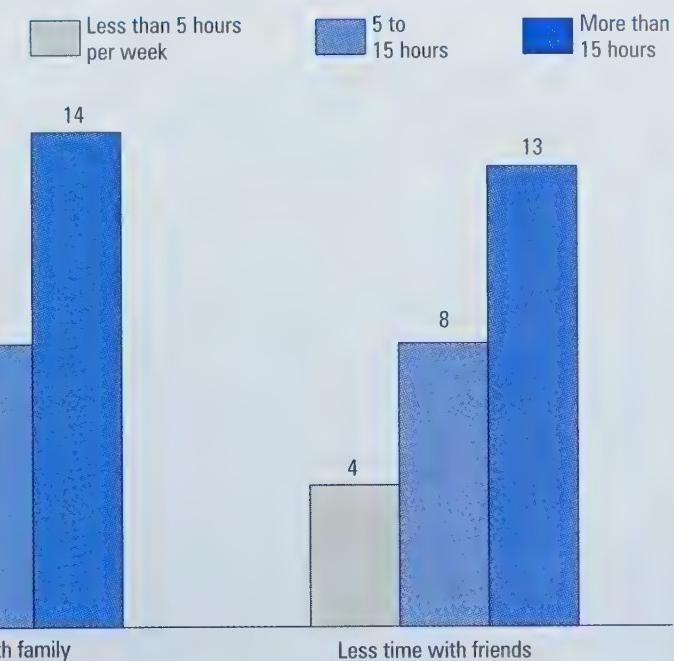
3. Users with children only.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

per week online; although they were much more likely to reduce sleep time (27%) and TV time (53%) in order to find the necessary hours to devote to

the Internet, a significant proportion stated that they cut down on visiting or talking with family (14%) and friends (13%). Among the 33% of

% of Internet users



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

moderate Internet users reporting between 5 and 15 hours a week on the Internet, about 8% scaled back time with family or friends. In contrast, only a few of the 53% of users surfing the Net for less than 5 hours a week reduced time spent with family (5%) and friends (4%).

Although data on the actual amount of time spent on non-Internet activities were not collected by the 2000 GSS, it is possible to get a rough idea from the 1998 GSS. These data show that Internet users spend about 4 hours engaging in social contact with other members of their household, which is about 48 minutes less per day than non-users. On the other hand, they reported about 72 more minutes of social contact with people outside the household (6.3 hours), suggesting that Internet users may talk less face-to-face with their families but chat more online with other people.³

Long-time Internet users are more likely to reduce time spent doing other activities

Generally, when people first buy a new "toy", they tend to devote a lot of time learning how to use it. As the novelty wears off, they spend less time with it. This, however, does not appear to be the case with the Internet. Individuals who had been using the Internet for more than one year spent an average of almost 9 hours per week online in 2000, compared with just under 5 hours for people who had been using the Net for less than 12 months. Part of this difference may be attributable to the greater amount of time that long-time users spent working for pay: 8% of employed users with over one year's Internet

experience reported that their work-time had increased because they were now online, compared with only 3% of new users.

On the other hand, long-time Internet users cut down on certain activities. For example, about 29% watched less TV, in contrast to 19% of those who were newer users. The pattern is similar for reading print material and pursuing other at-home leisure activities. However, the likelihood that long-time Internet users cut down on time with friends is not significantly different than that for more recent users of the Net. This may indicate that with time, the Internet evolves into a hobby that replaces some leisure activities but not those outside the home.

Summary

There is little doubt that the Internet is an important tool for many Canadians. Vast amounts of information are stored only a "few clicks away," transmission of information is quick, and regardless of distance families and friends can communicate almost instantly at minimal cost. On the other hand, some Internet users have found that they have reduced the time spent on social activities with friends and family. Nevertheless, the data suggest not that they are unplugged from life, but that they are plugged in differently from non-users.



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3. Based on information for individuals who used the Internet for non-work-related activities in the previous 12 months.

Volunteering and giving: a regional perspective

by Paul B. Reed and L. Kevin Selbee

This article was adapted from *Formal and Informal Caring and Giving: Regional and Community Patterns in Canada*, one in a series of reports from the Non-profit Sector Knowledge Base Project. This is the third of a series of articles *Canadian Social Trends* is publishing to commemorate the International year of the Volunteer.

and direct personal volunteering and giving are taken into account. In addition, the article shows that distinctive styles of giving and volunteering appear to characterize several regions and certain kinds of communities. The following analysis is based on data from both the 1997 and the 2000 National Surveys of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP), along with some information from the 1987 Volunteer Activity Survey (VAS).

declined to 6.5 million, or 27% of the adult population. These data are important, but they do not provide a complete picture. Many Canadians prefer to assist others directly, in ways that do not involve organizations, and it is equally important to take measure of these personal, less structured ways of helping.

In fact, the incidence of direct personal helping far exceeds that of formal volunteering. Compared with

Regional differences decline when formal and direct volunteering are combined

According to the 1987 VAS, about 5.3 million Canadians or 27% of the adult population volunteered their time and skills to groups and organizations across the country during that year. Ten years later, in 1997, these numbers had grown to 7.5 million or 31% of Canadians. By 2000, however, the number of formal volunteers had

1. Caldwell, G. and Reed, PB. 1999. *Civic participation in Canada: Why so much variation?* Reed, PB. and Selbee, L.K. 2000. "Distinguishing characteristics of active volunteers in Canada." *Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 29, 571-592. Reed, PB. 1999. *Generosity in Canada: Trends in Personal Gifts and Charitable Donations over Three Decades, 1969-1997*. Statistics Canada. 1998. *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 71-542-XPE.



What you should know about this study

Data used in preparation of this article come from the 1997 and 2000 National Surveys of Giving, Volunteering and Participating as well as the 1987 Volunteer Activity Survey. The purpose of these surveys was to ask Canadians 15 years of age and over how they gave money and other resources to individuals and to organizations, volunteered their time to help and care for others, and participated in civic and community activities.

Regional differences in rates of volunteering narrow when direct personal volunteering is combined with formal volunteer work

| | Formal volunteering | | | Direct personal volunteering | | | Total volunteering | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|------|------|------------------------------|------|------|--------------------|------|------|
| | 1987 | 1997 | 2000 | 1987 | 1997 | 2000 | 1987 | 1997 | 2000 |
| | % of population age 15 and over | | | | | | | | |
| Canada | 27 | 31 | 27 | 64 | 73 | 77 | 68 | 76 | 79 |
| Maritimes | 30 | 36 | 32 | 69 | 76 | 80 | 72 | 79 | 82 |
| Quebec | 19 | 22 | 19 | 62 | 66 | 76 | 65 | 71 | 78 |
| Ontario | 26 | 32 | 26 | 62 | 73 | 73 | 67 | 77 | 76 |
| Prairies | 39 | 42 | 39 | 71 | 77 | 84 | 75 | 81 | 86 |
| British Columbia | 29 | 32 | 26 | 60 | 77 | 77 | 65 | 79 | 80 |

Sources: Statistics Canada, National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 1997 and 2000; and Volunteer Activity Survey, 1987.

People in smaller communities have consistently higher rates of volunteering

| | Formal volunteering | | | Direct personal volunteering | | | Total volunteering | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------|------|------------------------------|------|------|--------------------|------|------|
| | 1987 | 1997 | 2000 | 1987 | 1997 | 2000 | 1987 | 1997 | 2000 |
| | % of population age 15 and over | | | | | | | | |
| Canada | 27 | 31 | 27 | 64 | 73 | 77 | 68 | 76 | 79 |
| Large urban areas | 24 | 29 | 25 | 61 | 70 | 76 | 66 | 74 | 79 |
| All other areas | 31 | 36 | 30 | 67 | 77 | 79 | 71 | 80 | 81 |
| Intermediate urban | 29 | 34 | n.a. | 67 | 75 | n.a. | 71 | 78 | n.a. |
| Small town and rural | 32 | 37 | n.a. | 68 | 78 | n.a. | 72 | 81 | n.a. |

n.a. = not available.

Note: Large urban areas have a population of 100,000 or greater; intermediate urban areas 15,000 to 99,999 and small towns and rural areas have populations of less than 15,000.

Sources: Statistics Canada, National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 1997 and 2000; and Volunteer Activity Survey, 1987.

the approximately 3 in 10 Canadians who offered their time as formal volunteers in 1987, 1997 and 2000, nearly 8 in 10 reported helping directly in 2000, an increase from 6 in 10 in 1987.

According to the two NSGVP surveys, 66% of people in 1997 and 63% in 2000 provided direct personal help to relatives not living with them, and 71% and 79% respectively to people other than relatives. The most common activities included helping someone with shopping or driving

someone to appointments or stores (55% of people provided direct help in 1997 and 57% in 2000); babysitting without being paid (54% and 51%); helping others to write letters, solve problems, find information or fill out forms (47% and 38%); and visiting the elderly (47% and 45%).

Across Canada, in each of the three survey years, the gap separating the regions with the highest and the lowest proportions of formal volunteers — that is, the Prairies and Quebec — was 20 percentage points. In contrast,

the gap was only half as large in the case of direct personal helping.

As a result, when formal and direct personal volunteering are combined, regional differences fall markedly. In both 1987 and 1997, the overall rate of helping in the Prairies was 10 percentage points higher than in Quebec (which had the lowest rate in those years), and in 2000 it was 10 percentage points higher than in Ontario (the lowest rate in that year). More importantly, while the rate of formal volunteering rose and then fell between 1987 and 2000, the overall rate of helping climbed quite substantially in all regions; the smallest increase was a 9 percentage point rise in Ontario and the largest, a 15 point jump in British Columbia.

These regional patterns may be the result of different provincial preferences for formal and direct personal helping. Canadians in the Prairies clearly had a greater propensity to volunteer through formal organizations, while those in Quebec seemed to prefer direct personal helping.

Canadians in small towns and rural areas are most likely to volunteer

According to the NSGVP, the proportion of people who volunteered formally was highest in rural communities; it declined steadily as the size of community increased. In 1987 and 1997, in small towns and rural areas the rate of formal volunteering was 8 percentage points higher than that in large urban centers. Interestingly, the gap between urban and rural areas was about the same when direct personal volunteering is considered. While formal volunteering rose about 5 percentage points in large, intermediate and small communities between 1987 and 1997, direct personal helping increased by 8 to 10 points. Although directly comparable data are not available for 2000, the trend suggests that informal helping

has risen faster in large urban areas than elsewhere, to the extent that in 2000 the overall rate of helping was the same in large urban and other areas.

Full measure of charitable giving provides a more accurate picture

Charitable giving serves numerous essential purposes. It enables many charitable and non-profit organizations to provide the services that are important to the well-being of individuals and their communities, it provides a vehicle through which individuals can express their ideals and values, and it improves the quality of life of the beneficiaries of the donations.

In 1997, just over 19 million Canadians, 82% of the population aged 15 and over, reported money donations totaling \$4.5 billion to charitable and non-profit organizations. In 2000, just under 20 million Canadians, 83% of the population, gave \$5.0 billion to charities. In both years, about 80% of Canadians also provided financial support directly to individuals and non-financial support to organizations, that is, direct personal giving such as giving money to people on the street, making bequests or donating food or clothing.

In 1997 and 2000, 78% of people who made donations did so as direct financial donations either by approaching, or in response to a request from, an organization; 36% in 1997 and 41% in 2000 deposited spare change in cash boxes, usually located beside a cash register at store checkouts; and 3% in 1997 and 4% in 2000 reported leaving a bequest to a charitable, religious or spiritual organization. In-kind donations were also common: 63% in 1997 and 70% in 2000 donated clothing or household goods; and 52% in 1997 and 54% in 2000 gave food to a charitable organization such as a food bank.

The regional patterns for charitable giving are much the same as those for volunteering. In all regions, the

Hours of formal volunteering in 1997 and 2000

Volunteers contributed a total of just over 1.1 billion hours of their time in 1997, and over 1.0 billion hours in 2000, an average of 149 and 162 hours respectively per volunteer during each year. However, the annual averages include people who volunteered on only one occasion during the year as well as those who did so weekly or even daily. In fact, 22% of volunteers contributed over 200 hours in 1997 and over 208 hours in 2000. These figures highlight an important change that occurred during these years: while the proportion of Canadians who volunteered shrank, the aggregate time volunteered by those who gave a substantial number of hours rose. This resulted in an increasing concentration of volunteering in a shrinking group of individuals.

proportion of people who give directly is consistently higher than that of people who give through organizations, and combining the two measures narrows the gap between regions. In 1997, the combined rate of giving was highest in Ontario (91%) and lowest in Quebec (88%); in 2000, the rate was highest in the Prairies (94%) and lowest in British Columbia (89%).

A comparable pattern exists across communities of different size. The rates of combined giving diverge by less than 2 percentage points in 1997 and 2000, compared with a gap of 6 percentage points in 1997 and 3 percentage points in 2000 for formal charitable giving alone.

Summary

Direct personal giving and volunteering constitute a large part of contributory behaviour. Consequently, contributory behaviour in Canada can be better characterized and understood by taking account of both formal and direct personal volunteering and giving.

While regional and community differences in the incidence of volunteering and giving are considerably reduced when formal and direct personal styles are combined, they are not eliminated entirely. People in the Prairies prefer to volunteer and give

through formal channels, while residents of Quebec favour contributing directly. Finally, differences in the incidence and mix of total volunteering and contributing are considerably smaller across communities than across regions.

The existence of regional styles of helping and giving is not unusual or surprising — there is in Canada, after all, systematic regional patterning of numerous other social phenomena such as unemployment, marriage and divorce, and crime. What is it in certain regions that gives rise to their particular style? What is the role of regional values and subculture? Of different regional demographic features? Of social and economic conditions? Answers to these questions require further analysis.



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The harm that family violence does to children

If children witness physical fights between adults or teenagers in their home, they are much more likely to be physically aggressive, to commit delinquent acts against property, and to display emotional disorders and hyperactivity. About 70% of children who saw or heard spousal violence in the 5-year period preceding the 1999 General Social Survey witnessed assaults against their mothers. In half of all cases of wife assault witnessed by children, the women feared for their lives or were physically injured. Victims were more likely to seek help if their children witnessed spousal violence — in 45% of cases, the victim reported the incident to police and in 53% of cases, the victim contacted a social agency. The majority of children in shelters for abused women were there for reasons of abuse; children under five account for the largest proportion, followed by children aged five to nine.

Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile 2001

Catalogue no. 85-224-XIE



Women and younger people most likely to be acceptable weight

In 1998-99, 42% of Canadians aged 20 to 64 (excluding pregnant women) were an acceptable weight for their height. Another 19% carried some excess weight and 31% were overweight. In 1998-99, women aged 20 to 64 were more likely than men to be underweight (11% versus 3%) and were more likely to be an acceptable weight (48% versus 36%). Men had a greater tendency to have some excess weight (24% versus 14% of women) or to be overweight (37% versus 26%). Younger Canadians were less likely than older individuals to have weight problems. For example, 71% of 20- to 24-year-olds were either underweight or had acceptable body weight, compared with 37% of adults aged 55 to 64. In 1998-99, residents of Quebec (46%) and British Columbia (45%) were most likely to have an acceptable weight, while Newfoundland (43%) and New Brunswick (42%) had the highest incidence of overweight people.

Note: As measured by body mass index (BMI), weight in kilograms is divided by height in meters squared. The BMI-Canadian standard index is under 20 (underweight), 20-24.9 (acceptable), 25-26.9 (some excess weight) and 27 or higher (overweight).

**Health Indicators,
vol. 2001, no. 2**
Catalogue no. 82-221-XIE



Crime rate down nationally, up in some provinces

The national crime rate fell for the ninth consecutive year in 2000. The 1% decline was mainly due to a 5% drop in property crime, but increases were reported in total violent crime (up 3%) as well as several other offences (including drug offences, up 9%). The overall crime rate fell in three of the four largest provinces — British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario — but rose in Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Quebec, Manitoba and in all three territories. The homicide rate, generally declining since the mid-1970s, remained unchanged at 1.8 homicides per 100,000. However, the rate of attempted murders jumped 11%. The property crime rate has been generally decreasing since 1991, and in 2000 approximately 1.3 million incidents were reported by police, the lowest rate since 1973. Residential break-ins fell 12%, and business break-ins 3%. A 9% increase in cannabis offences contributed to the increase in the overall rate of drug offences, since they accounted for three-quarters of all drug-related incidents. Police charged over 69,000 persons with impaired driving, a 5% drop from 1999. The impaired driving rate had stabilized during 1998 and 1999 after 15 years of steady decline.

Juristat: Canadian crime statistics, 2000, vol. 21, no. 8
Catalogue nos. 85-002-XIE and 85-002-XPE



Older cruise passengers docking in Canada

In 2000, about 640,000 international cruise passengers visited the East and West coasts, up 17% over 1999 and almost three times as many as in 1990. The West Coast cruise market accounted for three-quarters of international arrivals in 2000. Almost 7 out of 10 American cruise passengers at the Vancouver Seaport were older adults, with the 65 and over age group making up the largest share (43%) followed by the 55 to 64 age group (26%). The growing segment of the cruise market represented by passengers aged 35 to 54 accounted for 23% of American cruise passengers to Vancouver. Although the Atlantic region is still in an early stage of development, its share of the Canadian cruise market has increased from 15% in 1995 to 24% in 2000. The amount visitors spend while visiting a port varies slightly. American cruise passengers arriving at the Vancouver Seaport spend an average of \$75 per visit compared with \$83 per passenger at the Port of Halifax.

Travel-log

Catalogue nos. 87-003-XIE and 87-003-XPB

The time of our lives . . .

by Janet Fast, Judith Frederick, Nancy Zukewich and Sandra Franke

Like other resources, time is finite. Unlike other resources, time is shared equally by everyone. Each of us has only 24 hours in a day, so spending more time on one activity means that we must spend less time on others. The trade-offs we make between competing activities depend largely on the nature of our roles and obligations at each stage of life.

Have the time use patterns of Canadians changed over the past decade? This question can be answered using data from the 1986, 1992 and 1998 General Social Surveys. These surveys asked about 10,000 respondents aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces to complete a time use diary. The information collected in this way allows comparison of activities over the years.¹

The results of the surveys show that the general shape of time use over the life course has shifted somewhat over the past decade. Leisure activities — such as socializing, watching television, reading, going to events, playing sports and doing hobbies — are occupying a larger share of the day, but this is not necessarily because we are spending less time on the job. In fact, total work time — paid work, unpaid work and education — has increased for some, particularly for those with young families. Rather, the extra leisure time seems

to come from devoting less time to personal care activities like sleeping, eating, washing and dressing.

Gender has an impact on time use at virtually every stage of life. Compared to men, women continue to spend relatively less time on paid work and more time on unpaid work such as domestic chores, voluntary work, adult and child care. Women also tend to have less leisure time and to spend slightly more time on personal care activities.

Nevertheless, men have increased the amount of time devoted to unpaid work over the last 12 years. It has not, however, eliminated gender differences with respect to work, particularly for married women.

1. The 1992 and 1998 surveys were conducted over 12 months of the year, while the 1986 survey was carried out in November; for this reason, there may be some seasonality in the 1986 estimates.

15- to 24-year-olds

without children

Students² today are spending less time studying and more time working for pay than they did a decade ago. On the other hand, they also have more leisure time, so that overall, the time they devote to total work has declined. Nevertheless, women still do more total work because they do about half an hour more unpaid work per day than men.

Employed³ young women and men 15 to 24 are spending less time at their paid work (including overtime and commuting time) than in 1986; instead, they are spending more time on unpaid work and leisure activities. Unlike students, young workers of both sexes spent about the same amount of time on total work in 1998, although paid and unpaid work were distributed differently.

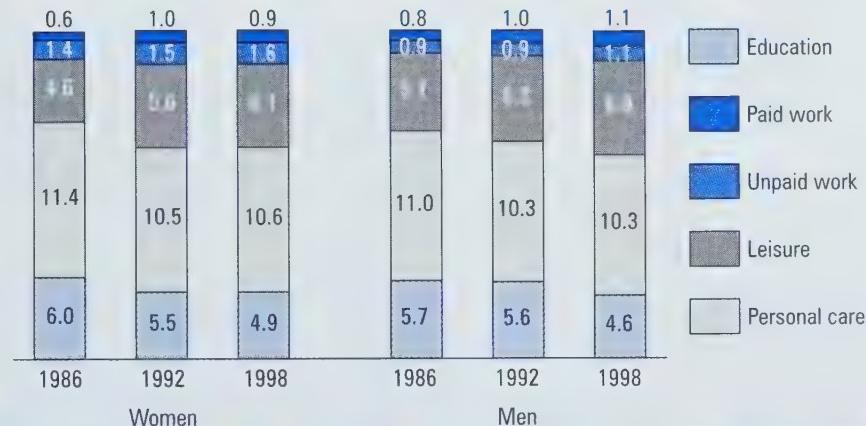
25- to 44-year-old singles, couples and parents

A far clearer image of the time constraints placed on people by their life roles emerges among adults aged 25 to 44. This is a time when people are building their careers and establishing families. Where does the time go? The lion's share of the day is devoted to working for pay and to personal care activities. It is in allocating the remaining time that most differences emerge when comparing those with and without children. For parents,⁴ the hours left in the day tend to go to unpaid work; for single adults, they go to leisure activities; for couples only, they are split between unpaid work and leisure.

The total workday of parents has grown by almost one hour over the past decade, as both parents cut back on personal care activities and fathers reduce their leisure time. Although the total workload is presently similar for both mothers and fathers, parenthood does result in a more pronounced gendered division

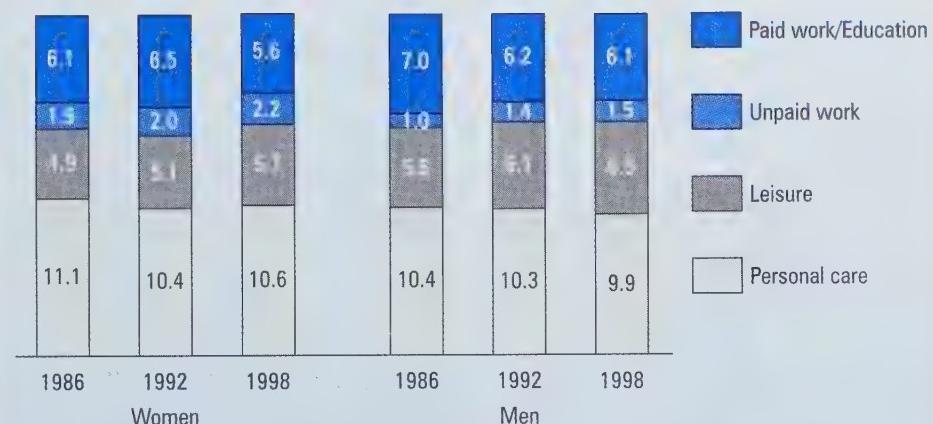


Average hours per day



Employed aged 15 to 24

Average hours per day



Note: Total may not add to 24.0 hours due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Surveys, 1986, 1992, and 1998.

of labour. For example, mothers devote 3 hours more than fathers to unpaid work and 3 hours less to paid work. However, the gap between time spent on paid and unpaid work has decreased over the past decade, due to mothers increasing time devoted to paid work and fathers increasing time devoted to unpaid work like child care, household maintenance and meal preparation.

Single never-married women and men now have similar time use profiles. Total work time is about the same (8 hours) for both sexes, compared with 1986 when women did

about 1.4 hours more than men. Men increased their hours of paid work by cutting back on personal care; at the expense of personal care and paid work, women found more time for leisure activities like visiting friends, going out and attending movies or cultural events.

2. Main activity in the past seven days is going to school.
3. Main activity in the past seven days is working for pay or profit.
4. Having child(ren) refers to having at least one child under age 25 in the household.

Couples without children (married and common-law), particularly women, spend more time on the job and on leisure activities than in 1986. They have found this time by reducing personal care activities like sleeping and eating. As with single adults, total work time is about the same for both sexes. However, in 1998, married women devoted 1.2 hours more per day to unpaid work than married men, while single women spent only 0.6 hours more than single men.

45- to 69-year-olds

Older employed Canadians have increased their leisure time mainly by cutting back on personal care activities. Men have experienced the biggest change in time use patterns over the past decade, devoting about 30 minutes less to paid work and 40 minutes more to unpaid work. Despite this change, the total work-day is about the same now for women and men as it was in 1986.

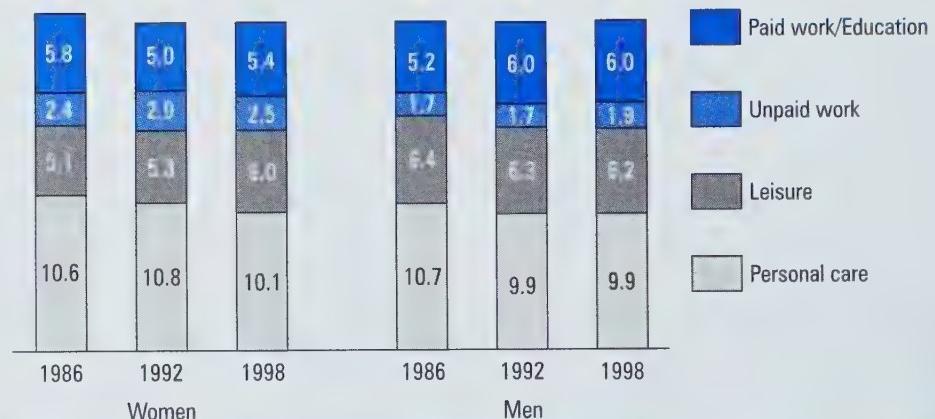
The pursuit of leisure activities occupies a growing place in people's lives upon retirement, as the balance of resources shifts from money to time. People aged 45 to 69 who are not employed spend nearly an hour more per day on leisure activities than they did in 1986. At this stage of life, the division of labour by gender translates into a difference in total work: women do about 1.5 hours more per day of unpaid work, time that men devote to leisure.

Adults aged 70 and over

Elderly people living with a spouse are spending more time on leisure and unpaid work, and less on personal care, than they did a decade ago. In particular, men increased their unpaid work time by almost one hour, while women gained one hour of leisure time. As a result, married elderly women now do only about a half an hour more total work per day than men, compared with over one hour more in 1986.

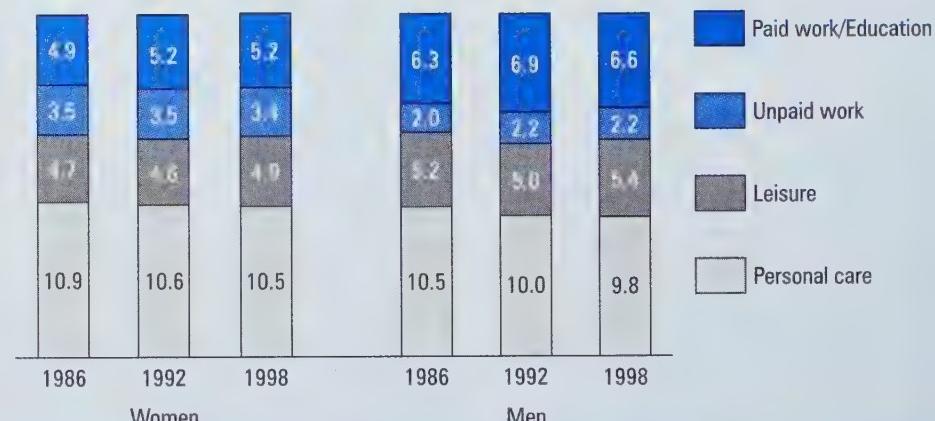


Average hours per day



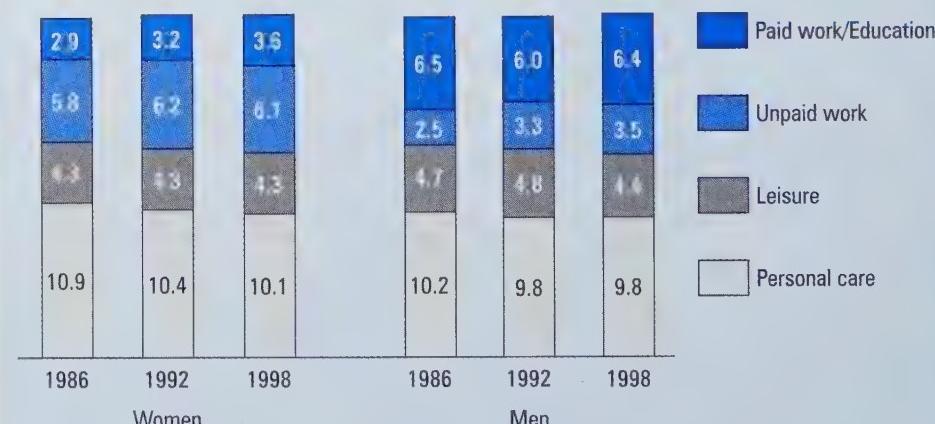
Married aged 25 to 44, no children

Average hours per day



Parents aged 25 to 44, with children under 25

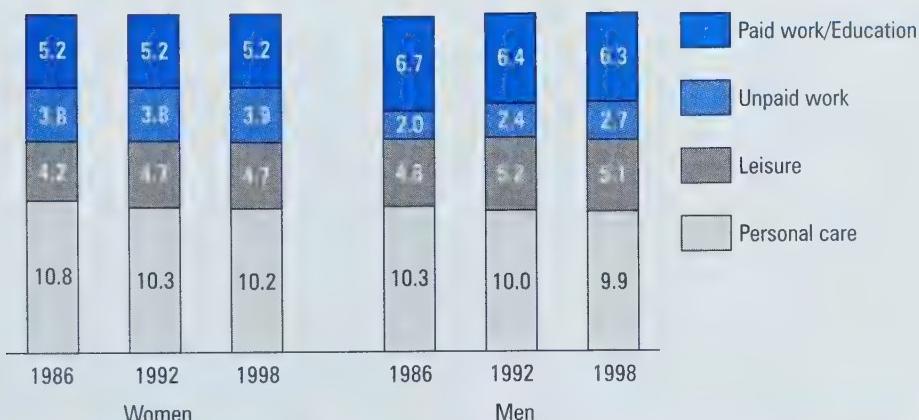
Average hours per day



Note: Total may not add to 24.0 hours due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Surveys, 1986, 1992, and 1998.

Average hours per day

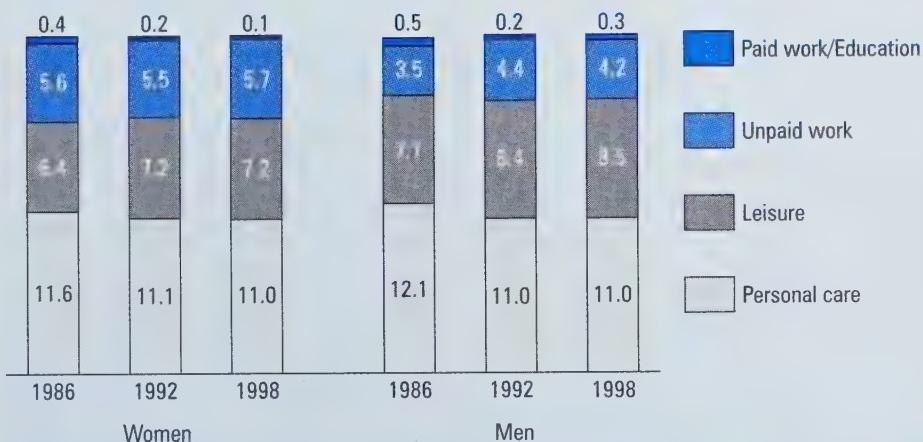


The time use patterns of elderly widows and widowers living on their own have not changed substantially over the past decade. Living alone means less unpaid work than living with a spouse: women do 3.5 hours per day of unpaid work and men do 3.3. Since 1986, widows have increased leisure time at the expense of personal care, while widowers now do about one hour more of unpaid work.



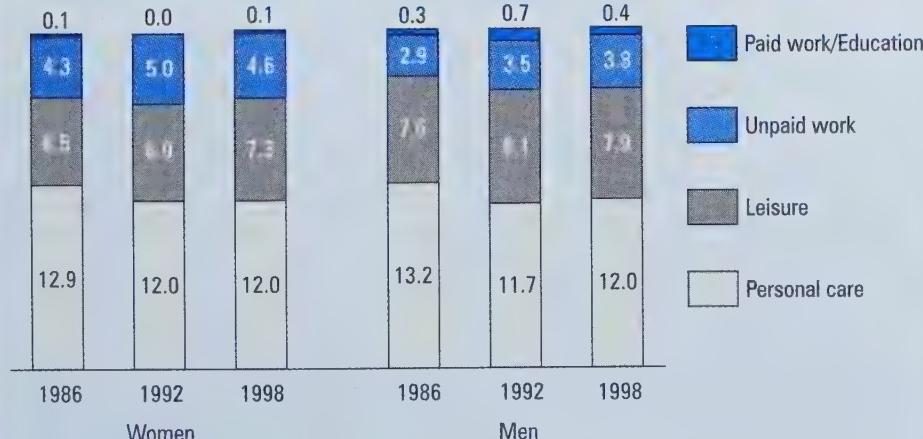
Judith Frederick, Nancy Zukewich and Sandra Franke are analysts with Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, and **Janet Fast** is a professor in the Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta.

Average hours per day



Married aged 70 and over

Average hours per day



Note: Total may not add to 24.0 hours due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Surveys, 1986, 1992, and 1998.

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SOCIAL INDICATORS

1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000

POPULATION

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Total population (July 1) | 28,376,550 | 28,703,142 | 29,035,981 | 29,353,854 | 29,671,892 | 29,987,214 | 30,247,949 | 30,493,433 | 30,750,087 |
| Age 0-17 | 7,025,902 | 7,082,130 | 7,129,781 | 7,165,631 | 7,205,638 | 7,209,093 | 7,185,052 | 7,143,308 | 7,109,003 |
| Age 18-64 | 18,054,826 | 18,250,340 | 18,466,074 | 18,676,227 | 18,884,263 | 19,119,660 | 19,333,124 | 19,559,844 | 19,791,187 |
| Age 65 and over | 3,295,822 | 3,370,672 | 3,440,126 | 3,511,996 | 3,581,991 | 3,658,461 | 3,729,773 | 3,790,281 | 3,849,897 |

Population rates (per 1,000)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total growth | 12.9 | 11.1 | 11.2 | 10.8 | 10.4 | 9.8 | 7.9 | 8.3 | 8.7 |
| Birth | 14.0 | 13.5 | 13.3 | 12.9 | 12.3 | 11.6 | 11.3 | 11.0 | 10.8 |
| Death | 6.9 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 7.4 | 7.5 |
| Natural increase | 7.1 | 6.4 | 6.1 | 5.7 | 5.2 | 4.4 | 4.1 | 3.6 | 3.2 |
| Immigration | 8.9 | 8.9 | 7.7 | 7.2 | 7.6 | 7.2 | 5.8 | 6.2 | 7.4 |
| Emigration | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Interprovincial migration | 10.9 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 9.8 | 9.6 | 9.7 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 11.3 |
| Marriage | 5.8 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 5.3 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 5.0 | 5.0 |

Percent growth in largest census metropolitan areas (to July 1)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Toronto | 1.7 | 1.4 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| Montréal | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 1.0 |
| Vancouver | 2.7 | 2.7 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 2.9 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.0 |

HEALTH

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|----|----|
| Total fertility per woman | 1.69 | 1.66 | 1.66 | 1.64 | 1.59 | 1.55 | 1.54 | -- | -- |
| Teenage pregnancies | 45,323 | 45,412 | 46,753 | 45,402 | 44,182 | 42,162 | -- | -- | -- |
| Rate per 1,000 women aged 15-19 | 48.1 | 47.8 | 48.8 | 47.1 | 45.2 | 42.7 | -- | -- | -- |
| % of low birthweight babies | 5.5 | 5.7 | 5.8 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 5.8 | 5.7 | -- | -- |
| Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) | 6.1 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 6.1 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.3 | -- | -- |

Life expectancy (years)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----|----|
| Men | 74.9 | 74.9 | 75.1 | 75.4 | 75.7 | 75.8 | 76.1 | -- | -- |
| Women | 81.2 | 81.0 | 81.1 | 81.3 | 81.4 | 81.4 | 81.5 | -- | -- |

Leading causes of death for men (per 100,000 persons)*

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|----|
| Cancer | 245.8 | 243.8 | 242.7 | 239.9 | 237.6 | 230.7 | 231.1 | -- | -- |
| Lung | 77.9 | 78.2 | 75.8 | 73.5 | 73.2 | 70.1 | 70.3 | -- | -- |
| Colorectal | 26.5 | 25.3 | 25.6 | 25.8 | 24.9 | 24.1 | 24.7 | -- | -- |
| Prostate | 31.2 | 31.3 | 30.9 | 31.3 | 29.3 | 28.7 | 28.1 | -- | -- |
| Heart diseases | 258.8 | 259.3 | 249.5 | 245.6 | 240.9 | 231.8 | 227.8 | -- | -- |
| Cerebrovascular diseases | 54.8 | 56.9 | 55.4 | 55.2 | 53.2 | 53.0 | 50.2 | -- | -- |
| External causes** | 67.4 | 68.3 | 65.8 | 66.1 | 64.3 | 60.8 | 61.2 | -- | -- |

Leading causes of death for women (per 100,000 persons)*

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|----|
| Cancer | 153.7 | 155.4 | 155.6 | 152.4 | 155.7 | 149.1 | 151.6 | -- | -- |
| Lung | 29.8 | 31.8 | 32.0 | 31.5 | 33.8 | 32.5 | 34.7 | -- | -- |
| Colorectal | 17.0 | 16.9 | 16.4 | 16.5 | 16.1 | 15.6 | 16.0 | -- | -- |
| Breast | 30.5 | 29.5 | 30.1 | 28.8 | 29.0 | 27.5 | 26.5 | -- | -- |
| Heart diseases | 141.7 | 141.9 | 139.9 | 137.5 | 135.3 | 130.2 | 126.2 | -- | -- |
| Cerebrovascular diseases | 46.4 | 47.8 | 45.9 | 44.9 | 44.3 | 44.1 | 41.9 | -- | -- |
| External causes** | 25.9 | 26.8 | 25.3 | 25.8 | 25.5 | 24.4 | 24.4 | -- | -- |

-- Data not available.

* Age-standardized to 1991 population.

** Includes events such as suicide, poisoning and motor vehicle and other types of accidents.

Sources: Population estimates come from Demography Division, and health estimates come from Health Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

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Lesson plan for "Wired young Canadians," "Older surfers" and "Connected to the Internet, still connected to life?"

Objectives

- To examine the ways that people of different ages use the Internet.
- To assess the value of the Internet as a communication tool for different groups of people.
- To discuss the costs and benefits of Internet reliance.

Method

1. Discuss the concept of "social isolation" and try to reach a consensus about its meaning.
2. Was the same kind of alarm about diminished social contact and disrupted family life raised when television became common in the 1950s and 1960s? What other communication technologies have sparked the same kind of concerns as the Internet?
3. How can the Internet help to prevent social isolation?
4. Older Canadians seem reluctant to use the Internet. With governments and other service providers putting more and more information online, older people who are not using the Net seem to run a real risk of losing access to valuable information and services. What do you think can be done to encourage older people go online?
5. Please see "Educators' Notebook" in Winter 1999 and Autumn 2001 for more Internet-based classroom ideas.

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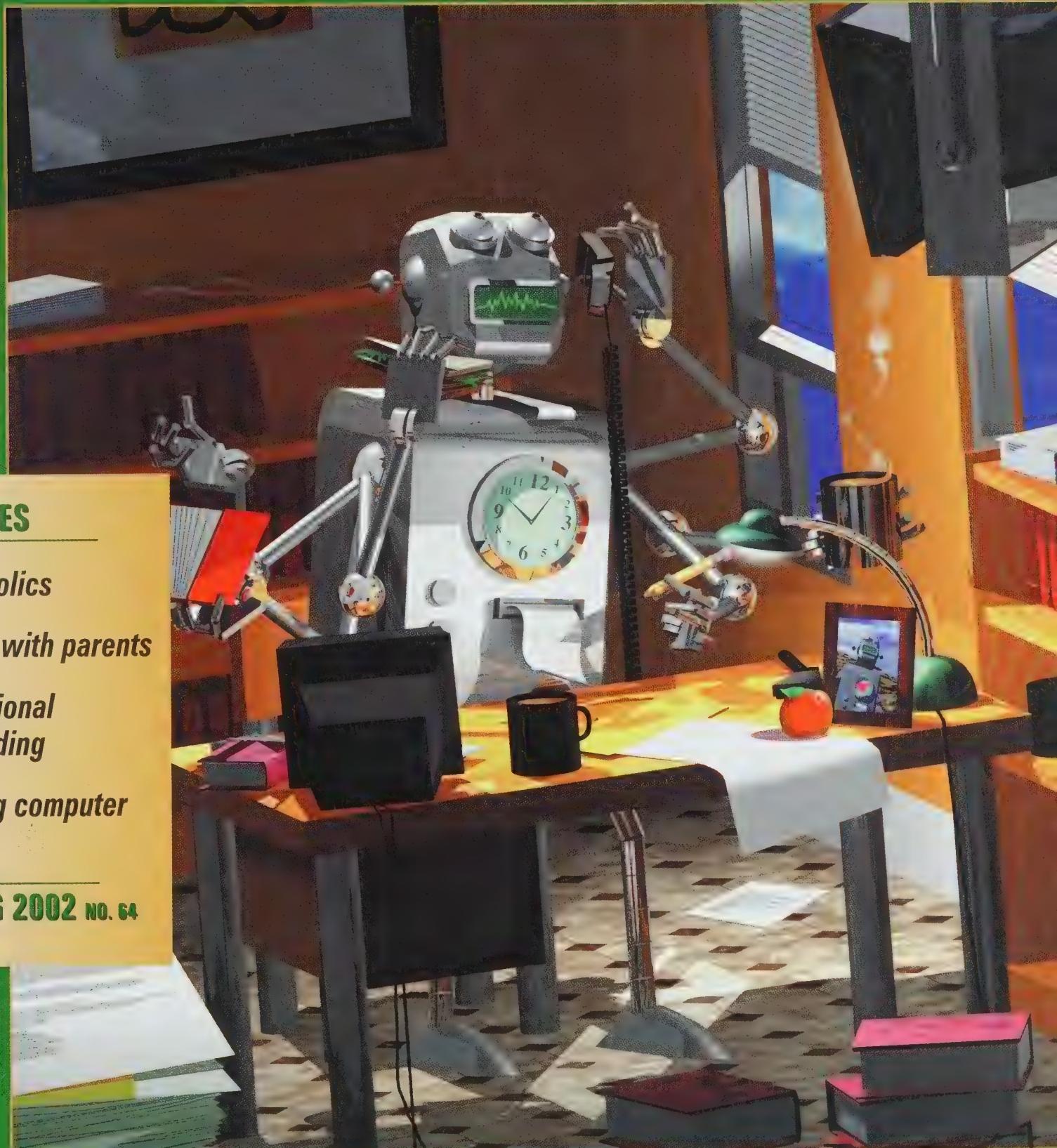
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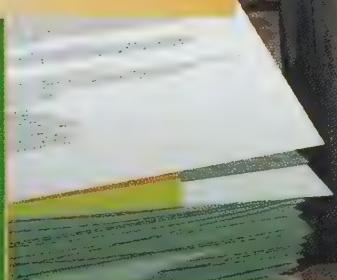
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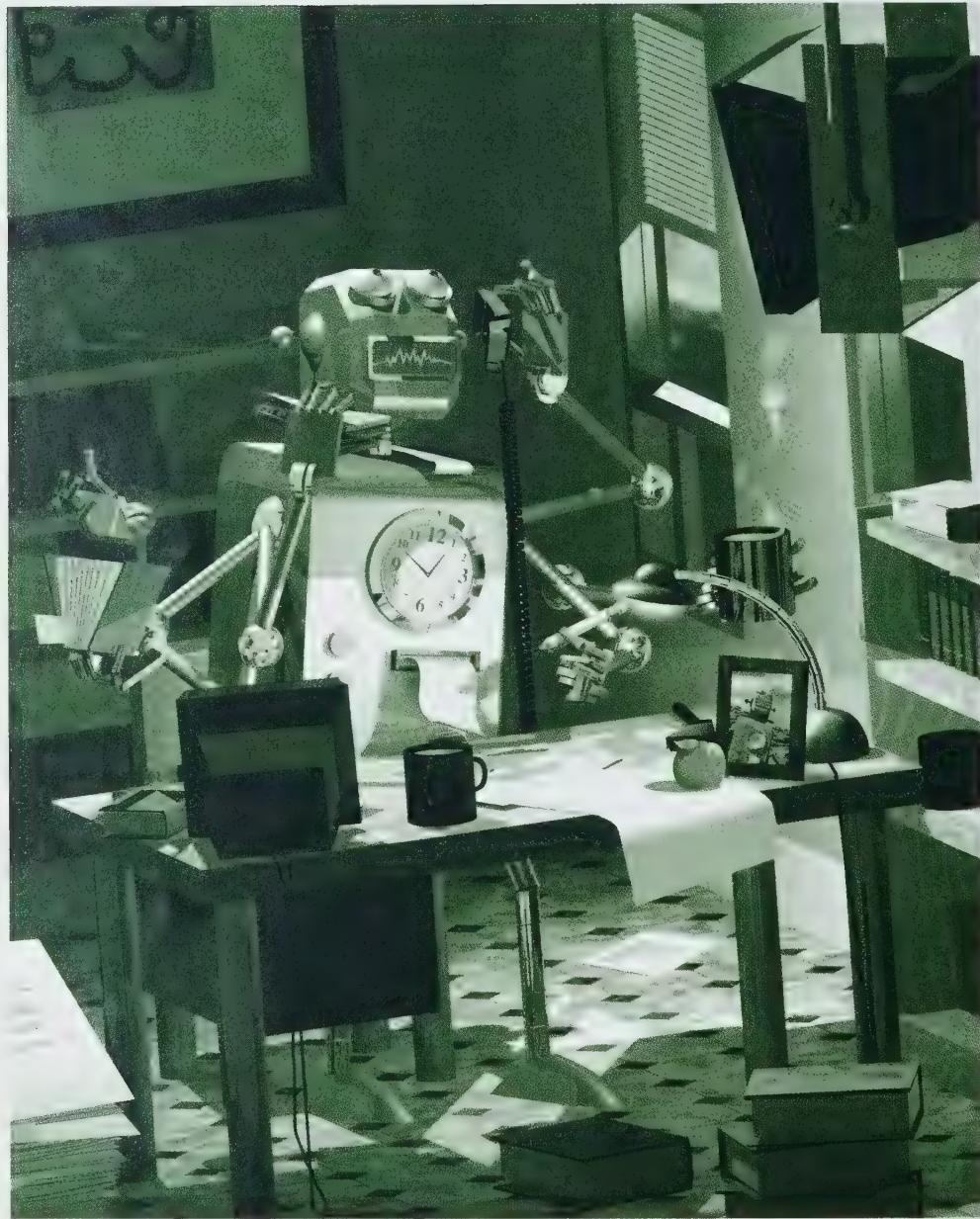
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Driven to excel: A portrait of Canada's workaholics

by Anna Kemeny



Whether it's paid work at the office, volunteer work at the library or unpaid work at home, work is essential for our well-being. Through work we define ourselves, develop our strengths, and take our places in society. Work provides us with direction and gives us goals to reach and hurdles to overcome.¹

Work addiction — better known as workaholism — is a different matter entirely. Like other extremes of behaviour, working excessively long hours does not generally lend itself to a healthy, balanced way of living. Workaholics tend to invest all their energies into their particular area of work to the exclusion of many other parts of life.

According to popular perception, workaholics tend to be middle-aged men in white-collar occupations — the very people who are least likely to be driven to overwork by economic necessity. Many are described as "Type A" personalities. In their search to excel, they often ignore their

1. Killinger, B. 1991. *Workaholics: The Respectable Addicts*. Toronto: Key Porter Books. p. 5.

Data in this article come from the 1998 General Social Survey on time use. The survey interviewed a representative sample of nearly 11,000 Canadians aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces.

Workaholic: In this article "workaholic" refers to all those who answered "yes" to the question "Do you consider yourself a workaholic?" Because the survey did not ask why people felt this way, we do not know what type of workaholics the respondents represent. What we do know is simply that, for whatever reason, they perceived themselves as such.

Researchers divided about dangers of workaholism
Given its derivation from "alcoholic," the term "workaholic" has understandably negative connotations. But although it has become a household word denoting someone who works unreasonably long hours, no widely accepted definition exists in the literature. Most writing has been clinical or anecdotal. Basic questions of definition have not been addressed and measurement concerns have been avoided.¹ Nonetheless, some of the more common types of workaholics covered in the literature are described below.

Experts' opinions often conflict about the elements and consequences of workaholism. For example, Barbara Killinger, a clinical psychologist in Toronto, is one of many who see the workaholic personality as obsessive-compulsive and fraught with problems. She describes workaholics as "people who gradually become emotionally crippled and addicted to control and power in a compulsive drive to gain approval and success. For these people work is the fix, the drug that frees them from experiencing the emotional pain of anger, hurt, guilt and fear."²

Others, for example, researchers Scott, Moore and Miceli, claim that workaholism is not necessarily a negative attribute. They have identified several different types of workaholics. One, the "achievement-

oriented" workaholic, is productive, happy, has a high self-esteem and is driven by enjoyment of work.³ Although these people also put in very long hours, work beyond what is expected, and think about work a lot, they do so because of the challenge it poses and the satisfaction they derive from it. For them work is not an obsession or an escape from a damaged sense of self, and they do not suffer from the same host of problems that their obsessive-compulsive counterparts do.⁴

In addition, many people, although not workaholics in the above two senses, find themselves — perhaps because of financial reasons — caught in a workaholic lifestyle that creates some of the same physical and psychological symptoms that obsessive-compulsive workaholics have. They are exhausted, emotionally burdened, and suffering from stress and relationship problems because of the disproportionate amount of time and emotional energy they put into their jobs.⁵ Still others may be forced into a workaholic lifestyle by the corporate culture of the organizations they work for and by society's tacit approval of this way of working.

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1. Burke, R.J. 1999. "Workaholism in organizations: gender differences." *Sex Roles* 41, 5/6: 333-345.
 2. Killinger, B. 1991. *Workaholics: The Respectable Addicts*. Toronto: Key Porter Books. p. 6.
 3. Scott, K.S., K.S. Moore and M.P. Miceli. 1997. "An exploration of the meaning and consequences of workaholism." *Human Relations* 50, 3: 287-314; Machlowitz, M. 1980. *Workaholics: Living with them, Working with them*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
 4. A 1992 study identified one cluster of workaholics characterized by above-average work involvement, who were being driven by an enjoyment of work. Spence, J.T. and A.S. Robbins. 1992. "Workaholism: Definition, measurement and preliminary results." *Journal of Personality Assessment* 58: 160-178.
 5. Robinson, B.E., Ph.D. 1998. *Chained to the Desk: A Guidebook for Workaholics, their Partners and Children, and the Clinicians who Treat them*. New York: New York University Press.

physical and mental health, and inadvertently compromise relationships with family and friends.

This is how the world sees them. But do they really fit this picture? Who are Canada's self-proclaimed workaholics? This article will use the 1998 General Social Survey (GSS) on time use to provide a brief profile of people who describe themselves as workaholics and then to investigate how they rate the quality of their lives.

More than one in four Canadians report being workaholics

In 1998, 6.6 million Canadians, or 27% of the population aged 15 and over, considered themselves workaholics. This proportion agrees with studies done in the United States, which estimate that approximately 27% to 30% of the U.S. population is "addicted" to work.² There is, however, no way to establish which types of workaholics these people may be. Some of them are likely to be obsessive-compulsive; others may need to work long hours in order to make ends meet. And still others may be motivated by the satisfaction they derive from their jobs.

Despite the popular myth that workaholics are mostly men, approximately one-quarter of both men and women report thinking of themselves as workaholics.³ And although it tends to occur more often in paid jobs, workaholism is not related exclusively to paid employment; it can occur in many unpaid activities when carried to extremes.

Children make a difference

The proportion of Canadians living alone who report being workaholics is similar to those who are married (including common-law) but have no children: 23% and 25% respectively. Rates of workaholism climb substantially among those with children; for example, 35% of respondents in lone-parent and 34% in two-parent



Parents of children between 5 and 18 years are most likely to perceive themselves as workaholics

| Living arrangements | Workaholics |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Alone | 23 |
| Spouse ¹ only | 25 |
| Spouse and child(ren) | |
| Age of youngest child | |
| Less than 5 years | 31 |
| 5 to 14 years | 34 |
| 15 to 18 years | 32 |
| 18 and over | 31 |
| Lone parent | |
| Age of youngest child | |
| Less than 5 years | 23 |
| 5 to 14 years | 35 |
| 15 to 18 years | 36 |
| 18 and over | 26 |

1. Includes common-law.

Note: Percentages refer to population aged 15 and over who reported being workaholics.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

families with children aged 5 to 14 years profess being workaholics. Of course, children generate considerable amounts of unpaid work in childcare, cooking, cleaning, running errands and many other activities. In addition, most parents of school-aged children also work in the labour force and thus are faced with long-term juggling of work and home responsibilities.

The years from the mid-20s to the mid-50s are the prime working years during which most people are busy investing in their careers and increasing their earning power. Despite this, there are no significant differences between the rates of perceived workaholism of various age groups. It appears that workaholism does not vary on the basis of age.

High-income Canadians more often claim to be workaholics

High levels of income and work addiction seem to go hand in hand. In 1998, 23% of Canadians with personal incomes under \$10,000 reported being

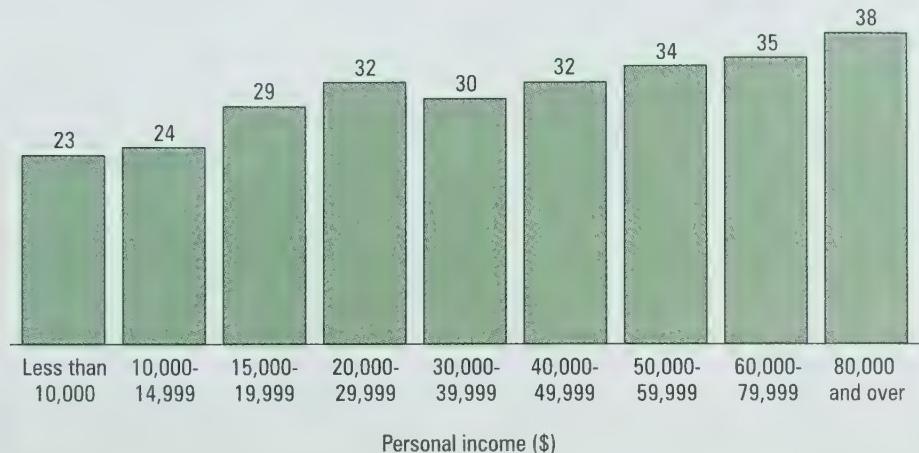
workaholics compared with 36% of those whose income was \$60,000 or over. Because jobs with higher pay often confer more responsibility, it is possible that people in these positions are under more pressure to work long hours and hence develop workaholic tendencies. It may also be that those with innate workaholic tendencies pursue careers that yield more income.

Nonetheless, it is clear that workaholics are represented in all walks of life. Surprising as it may sound, 22% of Canadians with no income also consider themselves workaholics. On closer examination, however, this is not as startling as it first appears. Most

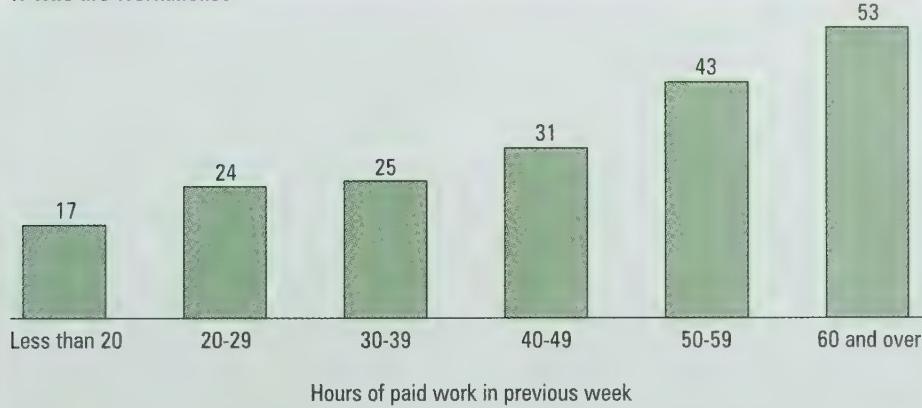
2. Robinson, B.E., Ph.D. 1998. *Chained to the Desk: A Guidebook for Workaholics, their Partners and Children, and the Clinicians who Treat them*. New York: New York University Press. p. 2.

3. In the United States, the number of female workaholics has been climbing as women enter more traditionally male-dominated jobs. Robinson. p. 55.

% who are workaholics

**as well as people who work long hours for pay**

% who are workaholics



Note: Percentages refer to population aged 15 and over who reported being workaholics.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

Canadians with no income consist of homemakers, students, retired people, individuals looking for work, and those who are ill. Individuals in each group may have their own reasons for claiming to be workaholics.

For instance, homemakers face a multitude of tasks, such as bringing up children, running errands, cooking, scheduling and keeping house, while students carry out research, perform experiments, take notes and study for exams. In a quest for perfection, it is possible to carry any of these activities to extremes. As for retired people, those looking for work and people who

are ill, their claim to be workaholics may be a reference to their previous work habits or simply a general personality trait that affects their lifestyle regardless of circumstances.

Although work addiction can happen to anyone in any setting, Canadians in management occupations (38%), trades (36%), and processing, manufacturing and utilities jobs (36%) were most likely to consider themselves workaholics. Workers in clerical occupations were least likely to do so (27%). These findings indicate that workaholics are not always in corporate or office jobs.

Over half of people working more than 60 hours a week are workaholics

Although long hours spent at work are in themselves not enough to qualify someone as a workaholic,⁴ the more hours GSS respondents put into paid work, the more likely they were to consider themselves workaholics. Fifty-three percent of those who had worked 60 hours or more at a paid job during the past week report being workaholics compared with 43% who spend 50 to 59 hours on the job and 31% of those who work between 40 and 49 hours.

While workaholics tend to work more hours than others, it's a myth that they work all the time. Work addiction manifests itself in many work styles, patterns, and types. Some workaholics work incessantly, while others go through peaks and valleys or even procrastinate.⁵ Still others spend their time relentlessly obsessing about work regardless of where they are — during family gatherings, at the theatre, on holidays or while at the gym. They may not be at work, but they are working.

Nearly 6 in 10 workaholics worry about lack of family time

Worry, guilt and feelings of anxiety tend to characterize work addicts to a larger degree than other people. While more than half (57%) of self-identified workaholics say they worry about not spending enough time with family and friends, only 35% of non-workaholics feel this way. Clearly,

4. Scott et al. identified three elements of workaholic behaviour patterns: discretionary time spent in work activities, thinking about work when not working, and working beyond organizational requirements. Scott, K.S., K.S. Moore and M.P. Miceli. 1997. "An exploration of the meaning and consequences of workaholism." *Human Relations* 50, 3: 292.

5. Robinson. p. 55.

Do you...

| | Men Workaholics | Men Non-workaholics | % who answered "yes" | |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | Women Workaholics | Women Non-workaholics |
| Plan to slow down in the coming year | 33 | 21 | 36 | 23 |
| Cut down on sleep when you need time | 65 | 46 | 61 | 43 |
| Feel that you're constantly under stress trying to accomplish more than you can handle | 55 | 26 | 61 | 32 |
| Worry that you don't spend enough time with family and friends | 59 | 35 | 53 | 35 |
| Feel trapped in a daily routine | 49 | 33 | 58 | 36 |
| Feel that you just don't have time for fun any more | 55 | 28 | 58 | 32 |
| Experience a lot of stress ¹ | 24 | 13 | 38 | 20 |
| Describe yourself a very happy person | 34 | 42 | 39 | 42 |
| Feel very satisfied with your life as a whole | 30 | 40 | 31 | 37 |

1. Refers to the 2 weeks preceding the survey.

Note: Percentages refer to population aged 15 and over.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

workaholics are aware of the disruption their work style causes in the lives of those around them. This realization, however, is often difficult to translate into action. Achieving balance requires more than cutting back on hours; for obsessive-compulsive workaholics, in particular, it involves deep personal introspection and insights as well as attention to the parts of life that have been neglected.⁶

Psychologists who treat them and researchers who study them point out that families of workaholics often pay the price for this behaviour. According to Diane Fassel, "Workaholics are not emotionally available to their loved ones. They are often preoccupied and make promises they don't keep."⁷ Children frequently grow up without being able to establish a solid relationship with the workaholic parent, while spouses suffer from a sense of abandonment and loneliness. According to many psychologists, workaholism is a major source of marital breakdown.⁸ In addition, because workaholism is accepted and frequently encouraged by society, families of workaholics often receive very little support or understanding

from relatives and friends, who see only a hard worker trying to provide for his or her family.

For obvious reasons, time spent — or not spent — on other areas of life was also of concern to workaholics. They are nearly twice as likely as other Canadians to feel somewhat or very dissatisfied with the way they spent their other time: 26% versus 14%. When work dominates to the exclusion of all else, there simply may not be any time or energy left for other interests or activities.

Workaholics twice as likely as others to feel stressed

In addition to worries about time, notable differences also show up in other areas of emotional well-being. Stress, feelings of helplessness and a life without fun appear to be more of an issue for workaholics than for others. For example, workaholics are twice as likely as other Canadians to report feeling constantly under stress trying to accomplish more than they could handle (58% compared with 29%). Over half feel trapped in a daily routine compared with just one-third of their non-workaholic counterparts,

and nearly six in 10 state that they just don't have time for fun any more, versus three in 10 others.

According to researchers and psychologists, true workaholics are seldom happy. Many are driven by some inner compulsion, or work to overcome low self-esteem and feelings of emptiness. Some say they will feel happy when their tasks are accomplished, but since the work is never done, happiness is always the next project away.⁹ Those who owe their workaholic lifestyles to financial difficulties may not have any of the above problems, but still lead unbalanced, hectic lives which often get in the way of happiness. Indeed, the GSS data show that workaholics are

6. Robinson. p. 37.

7. Fassel, D. 1990. *Working Ourselves to Death: The High Cost of Workaholism and the Rewards of Recovery*. New York: Harper-Collins. p. 14-15.

8. Robinson, B.E., Ph.D. 1998. "The workaholic family: a clinical perspective." *The American Journal of Family Therapy* 26: 65-75.

9. Fassel. p. 16.

significantly less likely than others to report feeling very happy: 36% versus 42%, respectively.

Closely related to happiness is satisfaction with life as a whole. It is, therefore, to be expected that people who are less happy would also be less satisfied. When asked by the GSS if they were very satisfied with their lives, 31% of workaholics compared with 38% of non-workaholics answered "yes". It's not difficult to see why this may be so. People whose identity has been consumed, time and energy robbed and thoughts seized by work are unlikely to feel that life is very satisfying.

Workaholics rate their health worse than others

A variety of health problems ranging from exhaustion and anxiety to high blood pressure are attributed to workaholism.¹⁰ In fact, working longer than the standard 35 to 40 hours a week is thought to be detrimental to health regardless of workaholic tendencies. While Statistics Canada's 1996-97 National Population Health Survey has linked longer work hours with increased chances of weight gain, smoking or alcohol consumption, studies in Japan have associated them with high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.¹¹ It is, therefore, not surprising to find that in 1998 self-reported workaholics were less likely to rate themselves as very satisfied with their health: about 36% compared with 40% of non-workaholics.

Researchers also differ on how much satisfaction workaholics actually get out of their jobs. While most claim that workaholism is an addiction that has nothing to do with pleasure or satisfaction, others maintain that some workaholics are motivated by the pleasure of doing a job well. Data from the GSS indicate that workaholics derive as much satisfaction from their careers as other workers: nearly four in 10 of both

workaholics and other Canadians report feeling very satisfied with their job.

The two groups are also equally likely to report being very satisfied with their finances: 18% of workaholics versus 19% of non-workaholics. At the other end of the spectrum, however, workaholics are more likely to be very dissatisfied with their finances (12% versus 9%).

Self-esteem presents another finding that contradicts some of the research which claims that workaholics have low levels of self-esteem compared with others. GSS data show no difference between workaholics and non-workaholics: around 4 in 10 of both groups report being very satisfied with their self-esteem.

Summary

More than one-quarter of Canadian adults identify themselves as workaholics, with men and women reporting this trait in nearly the same proportions. Certain socio-demographic characteristics appear to be linked with work addiction, among them high levels of income, working very long hours in paid jobs and having children aged 5 to 18.

Those who report being workaholics worry more and are less likely to feel happy or satisfied with life than other Canadians. They feel under

constant stress trying to accomplish more than they can handle, speak of being trapped in a daily routine and complain of never having time for fun. They are also concerned about not spending enough time with family and friends, and feel dissatisfied with the way they spend their other time. On the other hand, workaholics are just as likely to enjoy their jobs, and equally likely to be happy with their finances and their self-esteem as other adults.

10. Haymon, S. 1993. "The relationship of work addiction and depression, anxiety, and anger in college males." (Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1992) *Dissertation Abstracts International* 53, 5401B; Oates, W. 1971. *Confessions of a Workaholic*. New York: World; and Spence, J.T. and A.S. Robins. 1992. "Workaholics: Definition, measurement, and preliminary results." *Journal of Personality Assessment* 58: 160-178.

11. Statistics Canada. November 16, 1999. *The Daily*. "Long working hours and health."



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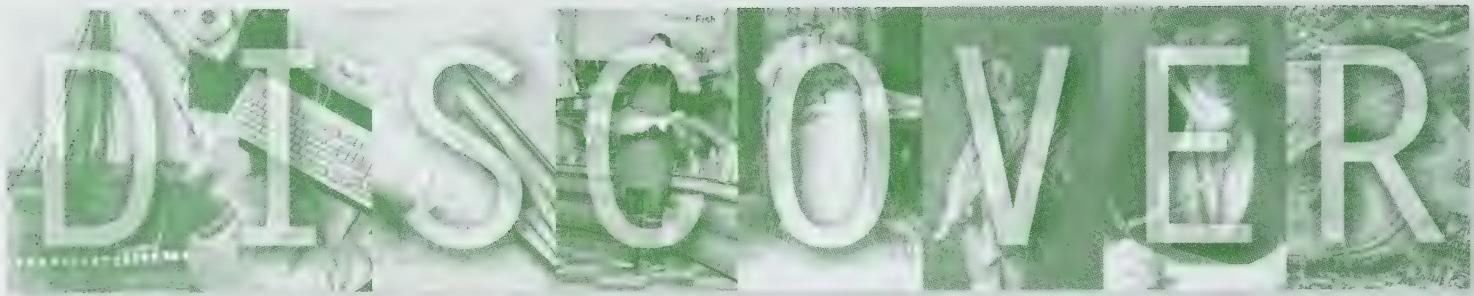
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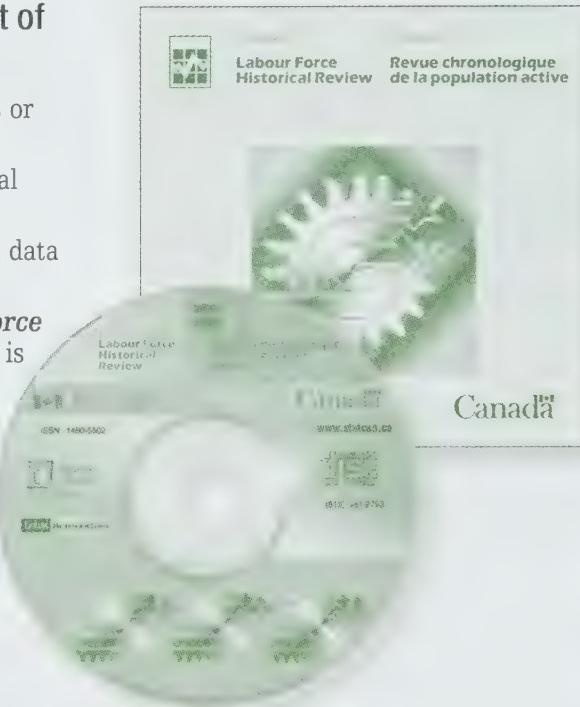
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Staying in touch: Contact between adults and their parents

by Barbara Townsend-Batten

The red flag is up on the rural route mailbox signaling a letter from a son has come; the telephone rings and it's the daughter who lives "away" with the weekly news about the grandkids; or the sound of a car in the driveway tells mum and dad that the kids have arrived for Sunday dinner. All are means by which adults and their parents maintain these close family relationships.



What you should know about this study

This article uses data from the 1995 General Social Survey on the family. Interviews were conducted with more than 10,000 Canadians aged 15 years and over living in private households in the 10 provinces. The study population for this article consists of adults aged 25 to 54 who provided information about the frequency of contact they had with their mother (about 4,900) and father (about 3,700) living in a separate household. This age group was chosen because younger adults are often still living with their parents or may have left the parental home temporarily to attend school, while many adults over age 55 do not have living parents (and those who do might be expected to have different issues with their parents than younger adults). Because the survey was conducted before the widespread use of e-mail and other messaging services available through the Internet, it seems reasonable to assume that rates of frequent contact may now be higher.

Contact: during the past 12 months, adult child has visited, written to or spoken with a parent who lives in a separate household (private household or institution). The survey does not identify who initiated the contact. *Frequent contact* constitutes contact at least once a week, including every day.

Mother: birth mother or mother substitute as defined by the respondent.

Father: birth father or father substitute as defined by the respondent.

Keeping up with family news and events can become more difficult when children grow up, move out of their parents' homes and set up their own households elsewhere. As the distance between family members increases, the amount of visiting tends to fall because personal visits over greater distances require more time, money and motivation.¹ But while growing geographical distance between family members can cause difficulties if aging parents need physical care, phone and mail are available and most adults stay in touch with their parents irrespective of physical need or proximity. However, the frequency of contact between adult children and their parents is often influenced by many other, non-geographic factors.

Using data from the 1995 General Social Survey (GSS) on family and social support, this article examines the factors that contribute to frequent

contact between adult children and their parents. "Frequent contact" covers telephoning, writing letters or visiting at least once a week. The study population is Canadians aged 25 to 54 with at least one parent living in a separate household.

Women are the ones who stay in contact

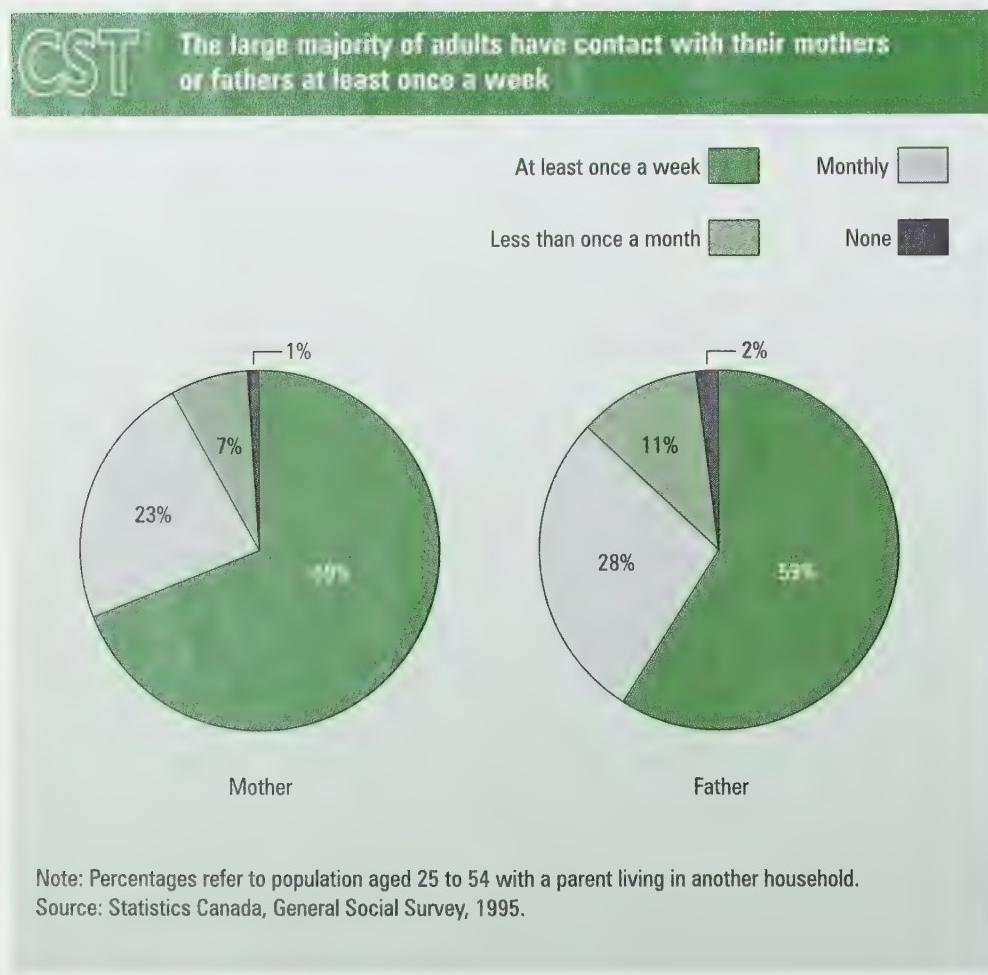
Adults keep in close touch with their families. Almost 7 in 10 adults aged 25 to 54 phone, write or visit their mothers at least once a week; nearly 6 in 10 communicate with their fathers that often. Few have contact less than once a month or not at all (8% for mother and 13% for father).

Daughters are more likely than sons to be in frequent touch with their mother, that is, at least once a week: 74% versus 64%. This is not surprising since women's traditional family role has been to play the main caregiver and kin keeper of the

family² and women generally feel more "responsible" for keeping open the lines of communication. This sense of kinship is common to both generations since both sons' and daughters' contact with mother is more frequent than with father. (Because the higher rate of contact with mothers is consistent across all variables, the rest of this article refers to data for mothers only unless otherwise stated. Data for fathers are presented in tables and charts.)

Because families with young children often require help, support or child minding assistance during the early family formation years, it is surprising to find that the presence of children does not affect the frequency of adults' contact with their mother. Neither does the adults' marital status. On the other hand, their age does have an effect: younger adults aged 25 to 39 have more frequent contact than older adults aged 40 to 54.

For many Canadian families, religious worship plays an important role in keeping the family together across the generations: 71% of adults who report having a religious affiliation were in frequent contact with their mothers, compared with 61% of those who stated they had no religion. As well, adults who go to religious services more than a few times a year are more likely to have frequent contact with their mother than those who do not attend at all (73% versus 67%).



1. For further information see McDaniel, S. 1995. "Emotional support and family contacts of older Canadians." *Aging and Society: A Canadian Reader*. Scarborough: Nelson Canada. p. 326-331.

2. A kin keeper is someone in the extended family who assumes the role of providing personal advice and emotional comfort to other family members. For further information see Rosenthal, C.J. 1995. "The comforter." *Aging and Society: A Canadian Reader*. Scarborough: Nelson Canada. p. 342-351.

This finding echoes results of a previous study which shows that people who regularly attend worship services place greater importance on the family than other adults.³

In addition, the GSS asked respondents, "do you think that you are a better parent than your father/mother

was?" Daughters who answered "no" to this question have more frequent contact with their mother than daughters who answered "yes"; the same holds true for sons and their fathers. The belief that your parent did a "good job" of raising you may indicate a good on-going relationship

between the generations, again reinforcing frequent contact.

On the other hand...

While some factors generate increased contact with a parent, others tend to have a negative effect. Adults 25 to 54 have a markedly lower likelihood of frequent contact with a parent who is living with a spouse other than the adult's father or mother. This finding may reflect difficulty accepting a parent's new partner, or the new partner's difficulty accepting the children. Interestingly, frequent contact with mother was just as high whether she is living alone or with father (71%), while contact with father is considerably lower if he lives by himself (48% versus 65% if he lived with mother). Weekly communication with father is lower still if he is living with a new partner (40%).⁴

The mobility of Canadian society has raised the possibility that family ties may be weakening. Certainly, adults aged 25 to 54 who have moved more than once in the previous 10 years report less frequent contact with mother than those who have moved only once (or not at all), and the effect is more noticeable for contact with father. Possibly the adult child develops new substitute or surrogate "kin networks" among neighbours and friends in their new location, and



Religious affiliation and the parents' current living arrangements have the most effect on adults' level of contact with parents

| | Frequent contact with | |
|---|-----------------------|--------|
| | Mother | Father |
| | % | |
| Both sexes | 69 | 59 |
| Daughters | 74 | 61 |
| Sons | 64 | 57 |
| Age of adult | | |
| 25-39 | 71 | 62 |
| 40-54 | 66 | 51 |
| Children in the home of the adult | | |
| One or more | 70 | 59 |
| None | 67 | 59 |
| Religious affiliation | | |
| Affiliation | 71 | 60 |
| No religion | 61 | 53 |
| Religious attendance in last 12 months | | |
| Attended at least a few times | 73 | 63 |
| Did not attend services | 67 | 56 |
| Believe they are better parents than their parents were | | |
| Agree | 69 | 48 |
| Disagree | 81 | 65 |
| Current living arrangement of parent | | |
| Living with mother or father of adult | 71 | 65 |
| Living with other partner | 61 | 40 |
| Living alone | 71 | 48 |
| Number of times adult moved in the last 10 years | | |
| None or one time | 73 | 65 |
| Two or more times | 66 | 56 |
| Balance of job, home and family life | | |
| Satisfied | 70 | 61 |
| Dissatisfied | 66 | 53 |

Note: Percentages refer to population aged 25 to 54 with a parent living in another household.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1995.

3. Clark, W. Autumn 1998. "Religious observance, marriage and family." *Canadian Social Trends* 46: 2-7.

4. Research on parent-adult-child relations indicates that parental divorce later in the child's life has a negative impact on several factors including contact; divorce while the children are still young has the most negative effects on father-son ties. Connidis, I.A. 1999. "Anticipating change in family ties and ageing: The implications of demographic trends." *Cohort Flow and the Consequences of Population Ageing*. (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-569-XCB).

| | Frequent contact with | |
|--|-----------------------|--------|
| | Mother | Father |
| | % | |
| Very happy childhood | | |
| Agree | 72 | 63 |
| Disagree | 54 | 31 |
| Emotional closeness to parents (before age 15) | | |
| Agree | 72 | 65 |
| Disagree | 56 | 46 |
| Place of birth | | |
| Canada | 74 | 63 |
| Other country | 50 | 42 |
| Language first spoken | | |
| English | 70 | 61 |
| French | 74 | 60 |
| Other | 55 | 49 |

Note: Percentages refer to population aged 25 to 54 with a parent living in another household.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1995.

becomes less reliant on parents for day-to-day support or conversation.⁵

Another factor that reduces contact is having trouble juggling the demands of present-day life. Adults 25 to 54 who are not satisfied with the balance of their job, home and family life are in touch with their mother less often than those who are satisfied (66% versus 70%). Perhaps overwhelming immediate priorities eat up the time available for a regular weekly call or visit.

A good relationship in childhood lasts into adulthood

The bonding that occurs between child and parent is often the basis for future relationships maintained between adult generations in a family.⁶ Canadians aged 25 to 54 who say they had a very happy childhood are more likely to have frequent contact with their mother than those who do not, at 72% compared with 54%.

Similarly, emotional closeness to the mother during childhood and early adolescence is linked with significantly more frequent contact (72% versus 56%).

Two other aspects of the childhood experience seem to have an effect on contact. Adults born outside Canada have less frequent contact, as do those whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. This finding probably reflects the fact that the parents of some of these adults may live abroad, making weekly communication expensive or difficult.

Summary

Contact between adults and their parents contributes to overall feelings of well-being, inclusiveness, belonging, self worth and security.⁷ Although there are no perfect families and no flawless blueprints for intergenerational contact, most Canadian adults talk to their parents once a week

or more. In general, women are more likely than men to pick up the phone, write a letter or visit. Adults with a religious affiliation tend to have more frequent contact than those without; similarly those who attend religious services report regular weekly contact more frequently than those who do not attend services at all. Not surprisingly, perhaps, frequent contact is also reported more often by adults who feel that their childhood had been very happy and that they had a strong emotional bond with their parents.

5. For further information see Pearlman, L.I. 1982. "Discontinuities in the study of aging." *Aging and Life Course Transitions: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Edited by T.K. Hareven and K.J. Adams. p. 55-74.
6. For further information see Long, M.V. and P. Martin. 2000. "Personality, relationship closeness, and loneliness of oldest old adults and their children." *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 55 (March 2000): 311-319.
7. Rowe, J.W., M.D. and R.L. Kahn, Ph.D. 1998. *Successful Aging*. New York: Dell Publishing.



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The changing recreational spending patterns of Canadian families

by Frances Kremerik

When you went shopping for your 10-year-old son's Christmas present last year, did you stop in the sporting goods aisle for a baseball glove or a basketball, or did you walk on past to the electronics section to pick up a video game or a DVD player? Perhaps you thought about a trip to the hockey game because his sister received tickets to the latest boy-band on her birthday? Maybe you weren't sure what you could afford because you had already promised the family a Caribbean vacation during March break?

Using data from the 1982 Family Expenditure Survey and the 1999 Survey of Household Spending, this paper will look at the choices Canadians make when deciding how to spend their recreation dollar. The primary focus is the household, and the differences between different types of households will be examined. This paper will also look at whether the increase in average spending observed over the last 20 years is due primarily to an increase in the dollars spent by households, or due to an increase in the percentage of households spending.

We spent much more

The last two decades of the 20th century were marked by two recessions. Average after tax income for Canadian households was only about 4% higher at the end than at the beginning of this period, rising from \$41,000 in 1982 to \$42,500 in 1999.¹ Income growth did not keep pace with spending increases as average household expenditures on all items (excluding income tax) rose 10%

while spending on recreation jumped by almost 40%.²

Although spending rose in every recreation category, it did not increase by the same rate for all components. Recreational fees and athletic equipment grew by only 8%, but most other categories recorded significantly larger increases, with the highest being 253%.

These increases in overall average spending mask more complex and subtle shifts in recreation expenditures. We certainly know that the products and services available to help us enjoy our leisure time have changed substantially over the last 20 years; some were scarcely on the horizon while the quality and reliability of others improved significantly.

1. All dollars have been adjusted to 1999 dollars using the Consumer Price Index.
2. From 1980 to 1989, consumer credit debt increased by 9%; from 1990 to 1999, it increased by another 22%. Williams, C. Winter 2000. "100 years of income and expenditures." *Canadian Social Trends* 59: 7-12.

This paper uses data from the 1982 Family Expenditure Survey (FAMEX) and the 1999 Survey of Household Spending (SHS), which replaced FAMEX in 1998. The 1982 FAMEX surveyed almost 11,000 households and the 1999 SHS over 16,600.¹ Respondents were asked about their household income and expenditures, including their recreational spending. All dollar values have been adjusted for inflation and are presented in 1999 dollars. Percentage increases or decreases are calculated using 1999 dollars.

Overall average expenditure: The overall average expenditure covers all households, regardless of whether they reported expenditures in that category or not.

Recreational expenditures: The following are groupings of recreational spending used in this article. The items in each category are not necessarily exhaustive.

Event admission: movie theatres, live sports events, live performing arts.

Recreational fees: single use and seasonal fees to sports and recreational facilities. Also includes children's camps.

Home recreation equipment: playground equipment, toys, board games, electronic and video games, computer equipment and supplies, photographic goods and accessories, and musical instruments.

Computers: a subset of the home recreation equipment category that includes electronic and video games, computer equipment and supplies.

Athletic equipment: sporting and athletic equipment such as ice skates and golf clubs. This category does not include athletic clothing.

Recreation vehicles, camping: picnic equipment, bicycles, snowmobiles, boats, campers, and the associated costs of operating equipment.

Home entertainment equipment: radios, CD players, tapes, televisions, camcorders, videotape rentals, and satellite dishes.

Cablevision: includes cablevision and satellite services.

Package trips: travel tours.

Other: unspecified recreation items. Please note that although the spending in this category is included in the total recreation average, no analysis specific to this category is conducted.

Furthermore, people's definition of what constitutes recreation has expanded during this time as well.³

Spending on recreational goods and services has changed because we are spending more (or less), in conjunction with more (or fewer) of us purchasing the product. Determining how much each factor influences the overall average spending gives us a more accurate picture of how expenditure patterns are shifting.

At first glance, it would seem that average spending rose because we were buying goods and services that just were not available in 1982 and, therefore, spending more. For example, CD players and cell phones were not on the market, and items like VCRs and personal computers were just beginning to appear. When products enter the market, they often carry a high price tag. Over time (sometimes only a year or even less), the price declines to a point where more consumers are able to purchase them.

-
3. Entertainment services like live events and the world of videos and TV packages are becoming increasingly important consumer items. Live spectacles and leisure parks are designed to allow people to purchase an "experience;" rather than entertaining themselves, many people now expect leisure and tourist destinations to entertain them. Notable places such as the Disney parks offer tourists a memorable experience, but places like the West Edmonton Mall and the Mall of America also are considered leisure attractions. Although their primary focus is shopping, they provide a variety of experiences from theme parks to rinks and golf courses and are conceptually no different than resorts. Earl, L. June 1999. "Entertainment services: a growing consumer market." *Canadian Economic Observer* 12, 6 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-010-XPB): 3.1-3.13; Butler, R.W. 1991. "West Edmonton Mall as a tourist attraction." *The Canadian Geographer* 35, 3: 287-295; Rojek, C. 1993. "Disney culture." *Leisure Studies* 12: 121-135; Jackson, E.L. 1991. "Shopping and leisure: Implications of West Edmonton Mall for leisure and for leisure research." *The Canadian Geographer* 35, 3: 280-287.

1. Data from intervening survey years (1986, 1992 and 1996) support the trends noted here, but they are not discussed in this article.

| | Average spent by all Canadian households | | | Allocation analysis | | | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-----|---|-----|-----|
| | \$ | | % change in spending | Components of change in spending (%) | | | | | |
| | 1982 | 1999 | | (a) | = | (b) | + | (c) | (d) |
| Total recreational spending ¹ | 2,134 | 2,962 | 39 | | | 36 | | 2 | 1 |
| Event admission | 155 | 228 | 47 | | | 43 | | 3 | 1 |
| Recreational fees | 221 | 238 | 8 | | | 45 | | -26 | -11 |
| Home recreation equipment | 421 | 727 | 73 | | | 63 | | 6 | 4 |
| Home recreation equipment (excluding computers) | 362 | 361 | 0 | | | -3 | | 3 | 0 |
| Computers | 59 | 366 | 515 | | | 55 | | 296 | 164 |
| Athletic equipment | 124 | 134 | 8 | | | 34 | | -19 | -6 |
| Recreation vehicles, camping | 471 | 516 | 10 | | | 11 | | -1 | 0 |
| Home entertainment equipment | 422 | 503 | 19 | | | 5 | | 13 | 1 |
| Cablevision | 94 | 333 | 253 | | | 134 | | 51 | 68 |
| Package trips | 197 | 256 | 30 | | | 2 | | 27 | 1 |

1. Categories listed do not add up to the total because of the exclusion of the "other" category.

Note: All values are presented in 1999 constant dollars.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Family Expenditure Survey, 1982 and Survey of Household Spending, 1999.

This increases market penetration, thus contributing to even lower prices as manufacturers take advantage of economies of scale and produce more units at less cost.

Many electronic goods became more affordable in the 1980s and 1990s for this reason. From 1985 to 1999, the price indices for both audio and video equipment fell by 21% and 33%, respectively. Despite lower prices, though, overall average household expenditures on these items rose. This example suggests that the overall average cannot tell us what really underlies the increases in recreational spending in recent years.

To find out, the change in spending over time was examined using an allocation analysis framework. This technique identifies whether the

change is due to households spending more money, or due to a larger percentage of households buying. For example, average household expenditures on home entertainment equipment rose 19% from 1982 to 1999, even though real prices dropped. In fact, increased spending accounted for only about one-quarter of this growth; two-thirds was due to more households buying these goods in 1999 than in 1982.

On the other hand, higher expenditures on other recreational items may reflect substantial spending increases. Average household spending on cablevision grew by 253% from 1982 to 1999. Just over half (53%) of this increase was attributable to the higher level of spending, although the substantial growth in the number

of Canadian households buying cablevision was also a significant contributing factor, as cable systems expanded into smaller urban and rural areas. Of course, the reason that households spent more and that more households purchased cable was, in part, due to the mushrooming variety of channels available beginning in the late 1980s.

Expenditures on computers represents both increasing popularity and improving quality of the product. Between 1982 and 1999, overall average spending on computers rose from \$59 to \$366, or 515%. However, 58% of this increase was due to more households buying and only 11% to households spending more (32% was due to the interaction between the two). By 1999, computers were a



| | | Average spent by all Canadian households | | | % of households reporting | |
|--|------------------------|--|-------|----------------------|---------------------------|------|
| | | \$ | | % change in spending | 1982 | 1999 |
| | | 1982 | 1999 | | | |
| Total recreational spending | Two-parent households | 2,718 | 4,089 | 50 | 100 | 100 |
| | Lone-parent households | 1,433 | 2,243 | 57 | 97 | 99 |
| | Two adults | 2,148 | 2,921 | 36 | 95 | 99 |
| | Lone person | 1,238 | 1,442 | 17 | 88 | 93 |
| Event admission | Two-parent households | 182 | 315 | 73 | 84 | 89 |
| | Lone-parent households | 126 | 189 | 50 | 74 | 80 |
| | Two adults | 129 | 196 | 52 | 62 | 67 |
| | Lone person | 124 | 121 | -2 | 59 | 56 |
| Recreational fees | Two-parent households | 292 | 353 | 21 | 77 | 63 |
| | Lone-parent households | 160 | 189 | 18 | 64 | 51 |
| | Two adults | 202 | 224 | 11 | 56 | 39 |
| | Lone person | 108 | 93 | -14 | 45 | 29 |
| Home recreation equipment | Two-parent households | 619 | 1,110 | 79 | 93 | 96 |
| | Lone-parent households | 281 | 599 | 113 | 80 | 88 |
| | Two adults | 335 | 587 | 75 | 75 | 84 |
| | Lone person | 177 | 276 | 56 | 53 | 60 |
| Home recreation equipment (excluding computers) | Two-parent households | 516 | 556 | 8 | 93 | 94 |
| | Lone-parent households | 245 | 296 | 21 | 79 | 84 |
| | Two adults | 308 | 311 | 1 | 75 | 82 |
| | Lone person | 159 | 132 | -17 | 53 | 57 |
| Computers | Two-parent households | 104 | 554 | 433 | 20 | 67 |
| | Lone-parent households | 35 | 303 | 761 | 11 | 44 |
| | Two adults | 27 | 276 | 921 | 4 | 34 |
| | Lone person | 19 | 144 | 674 | 3 | 19 |
| Athletic equipment | Two-parent households | 185 | 230 | 24 | 60 | 52 |
| | Lone-parent households | 78 | 77 | -2 | 37 | 32 |
| | Two adults | 97 | 102 | 5 | 35 | 28 |
| | Lone person | 98 | 54 | -45 | 21 | 17 |
| Recreation vehicles, camping | Two-parent households | 594 | 716 | 21 | 64 | 62 |
| | Lone-parent households | 189 | 249 | 32 | 36 | 41 |
| | Two adults | 640 | 658 | 3 | 38 | 42 |
| | Lone person | 236 | 212 | -10 | 19 | 21 |
| Home entertainment equipment | Two-parent households | 521 | 684 | 31 | 84 | 95 |
| | Lone-parent households | 287 | 481 | 68 | 70 | 90 |
| | Two adults | 383 | 389 | 2 | 65 | 77 |
| | Lone person | 280 | 276 | -1 | 55 | 61 |
| Cablevision | Two-parent households | 108 | 374 | 245 | 54 | 80 |
| | Lone-parent households | 99 | 322 | 224 | 53 | 73 |
| | Two adults | 90 | 341 | 278 | 47 | 76 |
| | Lone person | 65 | 251 | 288 | 38 | 62 |
| Package trips | Two-parent households | 185 | 267 | 44 | 7 | 11 |
| | Lone-parent households | 180 | 115 | -36 | 9 | 7 |
| | Two adults | 254 | 407 | 60 | 9 | 14 |
| | Lone person | 172 | 152 | -12 | 10 | 9 |

Note: All values are presented in 1999 constant dollars.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Family Expenditure Survey, 1982 and Survey of Household Spending, 1999.

Allocation analysis is a way to determine why overall average expenditures increase or decrease. It is comprised of three components. The first component identifies the change in the average dollars spent by those households that purchased the good. The second component distinguishes the change in the percentage of households purchasing the good (household reporting rate). The third component is an interactive variable that acknowledges that neither factor is truly independent of the other. The overall average includes all households, regardless of whether they reported expenditures in that category or not.

Difference in overall average spending between 1999 and 1982 =

Change in expenditures + Change in percentage of households reporting +

Interaction between change in spending and change in reporting

Mathematically:

$$D = (S_{1999} - S_{1982}) * R_{1982} + (R_{1999} - R_{1982}) * S_{1982} + (S_{1999} - S_{1982}) \\ (R_{1999} - R_{1982})$$

where

D = Difference in overall average spending between 1999 and 1982

S_{1982} and S_{1999} = Average dollars spent by households purchasing the item in 1982 and 1999

and

R_{1982} and R_{1999} = Household reporting rates in 1982 and 1999

For example,

| | Average dollars | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----|
| Overall average spending (D) | spent by reporting households (S) | Households reporting (R) | Interaction effect | |
| 1982 | \$20 | \$100 | 20% | -- |
| 1999 | \$40 | \$160 | 25% | -- |
| 1999-1982 | \$20 | \$60 | 5% | -- |
| Difference due to change in \$ | \$20 | \$12 | \$5 | \$3 |

common item in Canadian homes because they had become far easier to use, more powerful and more versatile (product improvement) and their price had dropped substantially (the computer price index dropped 55% from 1995, when it was created, to 1999).

The case of athletic equipment illustrates another outcome. Overall household spending rose minimally from \$124 in 1982 to \$134 in 1999. This virtual stagnation was actually a case of fewer households buying athletic goods, but those few households spending more on their purchases.

Kids count when it comes to recreational spending

As we all know, households make different spending decisions according to their particular needs. Over the past two decades, spending on recreation by households with children grew faster than that of others. Two-parent households saw their recreational spending increase by 50% and lone-parent households by 57%. Couples without children recorded a 36% growth in expenditures and one-person households a 17% rise.

Purchases of cablevision represented the largest single increase in recreational spending for all types of households. The home recreation equipment category also recorded large increases regardless of household type, mainly because this category includes computer equipment and supplies.

However, the purchase of computers and computer-related items increased most for those households that had children. Sixty-seven percent of two-parent and 44% of lone-parent households spent money on computers in 1999, compared with 34% of couples only and 19% of one-person households. The computer's presence in schools and libraries, and its growth as a teaching tool, has created a situation in which many parents



feel that owning a computer is no longer a luxury but a necessity to help their children succeed scholastically.⁴

But even when computers are excluded, spending in the home recreation category rose considerably in households with children. Almost one-quarter of increased expenditures by two-parent households, and nearly one-third in lone-parent households, was due to proportionally more households purchasing these items; but the lion's share was due to more dollars being paid to buy recreational items.

Event admission is another key area of increased recreational spending for families with children. In this category, the increase was driven primarily by households spending more rather than more households buying. In fact, 75% to 87% of the change in event admission expenditures in households with children was due to higher spending.

Families with children also spent more on home entertainment equipment in 1999 than 1982, rising 31% for two-parent and 68% for lone-parent households. Almost half of the increase — 50% in two-parent and 45% in lone-parent households — can be attributed to families spending more on these kinds of goods. The situation was different for other households, where average spending on home entertainment equipment was stagnant, even though more couples and one-person households reported buying such products.

Not all recreation items enjoyed surges in popularity. While more households bought goods like TVs, VCRs, CD players and laptop computers, fewer of them spent as much on athletic equipment and recreational fees. For example, in one-person households,

the dollars spent on athletic equipment dropped significantly between 1982 and 1999, accounting for almost three-quarters (71%) of the overall decrease in spending in this category for these households. And even though one would expect households with children to be more involved in sports activities, proportionally fewer of them spent money on athletic equipment and recreation fees. Nevertheless, overall average spending on equipment increased moderately for two-parent households. This was due to the fact that although fewer households were purchasing athletic equipment and paying recreation fees, those that did spent considerably more in 1999 than in 1982.

Summary

The toys we used in 1999 had more glowing buttons and made more beeps than their predecessors in 1982. The rise of the computer industry appears to have influenced not only our work, but also our play. More of our recreation dollar is devoted to purchases of electronic entertainment goods as opposed to more traditional pursuits, such as sports. The growing attraction of these indoor and relatively sedentary activities suggests that even the instruction to "go out and play" may become obsolete.



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4. Clark, W. Autumn 2001. "Kids and teens on the Net." *Canadian Social Trends* 62: 6-10.

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Learning computer skills

by Heather Dryburgh

In the western world, one widely-held assumption links men with a fascination for machines and technology. The computer is proving to be the latest machine attracting the attention of men, who are training and working with computers in much larger numbers than women. However, computers are an essential part of many workplaces and employers need both men and women with computer skills.

Although some come to the job with computer-related education, many workers need training or retraining to keep up with new hard- or software. Various training and education methods are available, but do men and women choose similar ways of learning computer skills? How effective do they feel their computer training has been? This article uses the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) to examine how men and women aged 15 and over learned their computer skills and which methods they found most important. After a brief look at all computer users, the article focusses on the training preferences of men and women working in three broad occupational groups: computer professionals, high skill occupations and all other occupations.

Most learn by trial-and-error, or with help from friends or family

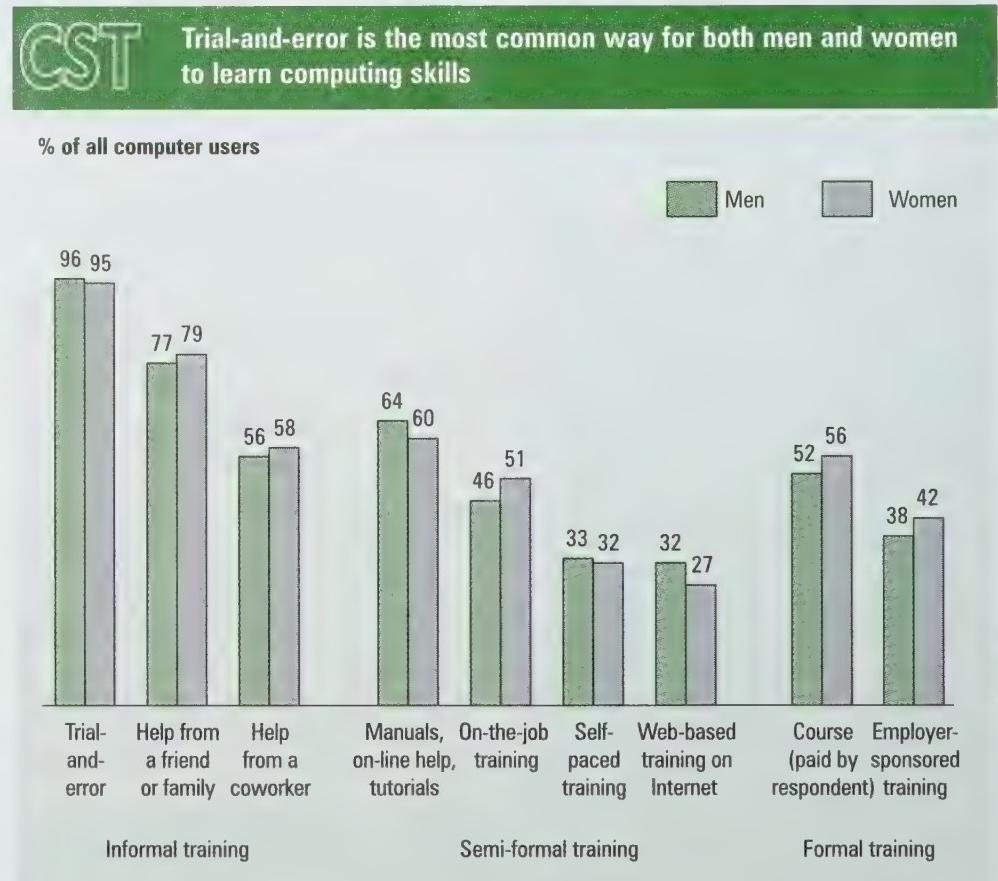
In 2000, 96% of all computer users reported that they had taught themselves computer skills through

trial-and-error; 78% had received informal help from a friend or family member. Formal training, such as a course at an educational institution (54%) or an employer-provided course or training program (40%), was less common. Web-based training on the Internet was the least common way to learn computer skills (30%).

Men were generally more likely than women to use self-learning methods; on the other hand, women

were more apt to use facilitated methods such as on-the-job training and informal help from friends, family and coworkers.

The majority of computer users had used several training methods to acquire their computer skills. Over half had received between two and five different kinds of training, while 11% reported using all nine methods. Very few people (5%) learned their computer skills using



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

This article is based on data from the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) on access to and use of information communication technology. The GSS is an annual telephone sample survey covering the non-institutionalized population aged 15 and over in all provinces. The representative sample had 25,100 respondents, with an 81% response rate.

Working population: refers to those persons aged 15 and over working for pay, including the self-employed.

Occupation: three occupational groupings were used in this analysis: *computer professionals* are computer programmers, systems analysts, and computer engineers; *high skill occupations* are jobs where workers are not computer professionals, but perform high skill computer work such as data analysis, some types of computer programming, graphic design or desk top publishing; and *all other occupations*.

General technology use: this is an index of general technology use, with one point scored for use of each of the following: fax machine, cellular telephone, automated teller machine (ATM), telephone answering machine or service, pager, cable television, satellite dish, and digital video disc (DVD). Scores range from 0 to 8. High scores indicate high technology use and low scores indicate low technology use.

Training

Nine measures of training are used in this article. They can be grouped into three general categories of formal, semi-formal, and informal training methods.

only one method, and of that 5%, the majority taught themselves through trial-and-error.

However, this general description of education and training obscures the somewhat different patterns that are found when looking specifically at computer users in the workforce.

According to the 2000 GSS, the computer training and education

of working women varies across the three occupational groups; it also differs somewhat from men's experience within these groups. For example, women computer professionals were significantly more likely than women in the other two occupational groups (high skill and all other occupations) to use Web-based training; nevertheless, they were still much

Formal training: This category includes two components: (1) taking a course at an educational institution (school, college, institute) for which the person registered and/or paid; and (2) taking a course or training program provided by the person's employer or a former employer, held in a classroom or training facility on or off the worksite.

Semi-formal training: This category includes four components: (1) self-paced training provided by the person's employer or former employer using videos, CD-ROM, training manuals, or training based on computers; (2) on-the-job training provided by the person's employer or a former employer; (3) manuals, on-line help, or tutorials provided by the computer or software manufacturer; and (4) Web-based training on the Internet.

Informal training: This category includes three components: (1) informal help from a coworker; (2) informal help from a friend or family member; and (3) teaching oneself through trial-and-error.

Self-learning methods: Generally preferred by men, these methods include Web-based training; self-paced training; use of manuals and on-line help; and trial and error.

Interactive (or facilitated) methods: Generally preferred by women, these methods include formal courses; employer-sponsored courses; on-the-job training; help from friends and family; and help from coworkers.

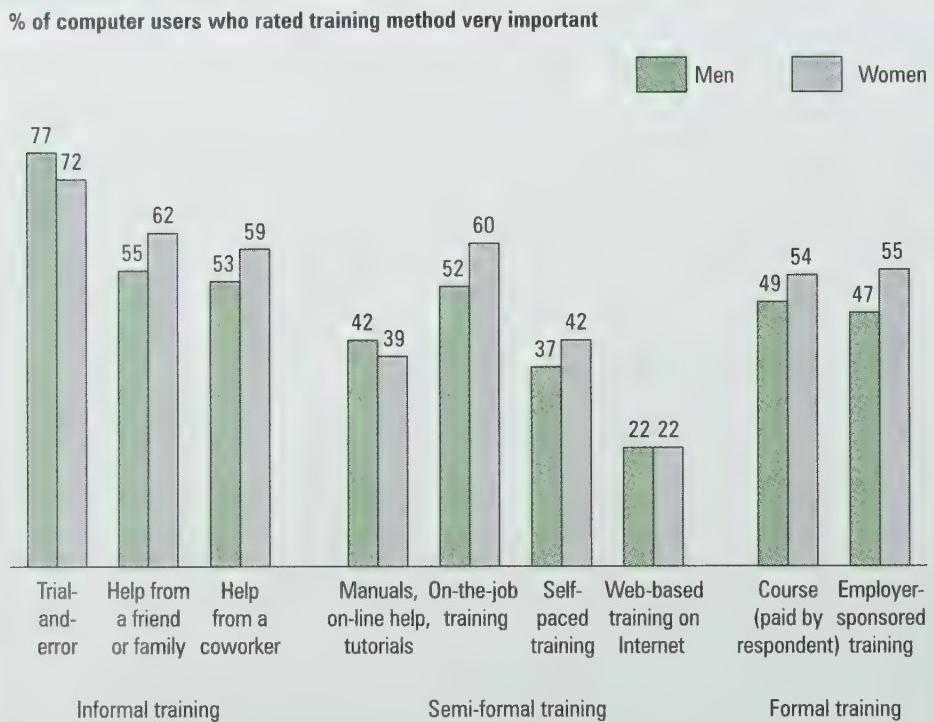
less likely than men computer professionals to learn this way. Other than Web-based training, the education and training experiences of men and women in computer professions were fairly similar.

The differences in the high skilled and the "all other occupations" groups were more considerable. Women in jobs requiring high-level

| | Men | Women | Total | % women |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| | | (000) | | |
| Computer professionals | 293 | 104 | 397 | 26 |
| High skill occupations | 4,039 | 3,137 | 7,176 | 44 |
| All other occupations | 4,494 | 4,059 | 8,553 | 48 |
| Total | 8,826 | 7,300 | 16,126 | 45 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

Formal and interactive training rated higher by women while self-learning is rated higher by men



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

computer skills were more likely than their male colleagues to report using interactive training methods — both formal and informal; men were more likely to rely on self-learning methods. On the other hand, women in the “all other occupations” group were more likely than men to have experienced training. This was true for eight of the nine training methods, the exception being trial-and-error.

Informal training methods get largest proportion of high ratings
Workers who used computers were asked to rate the value of each training method they had used on a scale from very important to not at all important. Compared with formal or semi-formal methods, they were more likely to rate informal methods as very important for learning computer skills. The only exception was on-the-job training. Men ranked

trial-and-error and using manuals higher than women. These two methods most closely represent the self-learning ideal often associated with computer work, and which tends to be highly valued by professors of computer science.¹

Working women rated facilitated methods — for example, on-the-job training, informal help from a coworker, family or friends, and self-paced learning — higher than men. These results are consistent with research that finds women greatly benefit from using social facilitation to learn computing skills.² Women were also more likely than men to identify formal training as a very important method of learning.

Computer professionals find formal training more important than others

Looking at how the working population rated various training methods, some similarities and differences emerge among the three occupational groups. First, whether people were in computer professions, high-skilled jobs or all other occupations, they rated trial-and-error most important and Web-based training least important for learning computer skills. On the other hand, computer professionals were more likely to report having these two types of training and to consider them very important than were workers in the other two groups.

Workers' assessment of the usefulness of the remaining types of training also differed between occupations. For example, compared with other workers,

- Rasmussen, B. and T. Håpnes. 1991. "Excluding women from the technologies of the future? A case study of the culture of computer science." *Futures* 23,10: 1108-19.
- Busch, T. 1996. "Gender, group composition, cooperation, and self-efficacy in computer studies." *Journal of Educational Computing Research* 15, 2: 125-35.

computer professionals more often described employer-provided courses, manuals, on-line help, and on-the-job training as very important.

Informal help from coworkers, family or friends were among the highest rated learning methods for the "all other occupations" category, whereas computer professionals ranked family or friends fairly low and were divided on the importance of help from coworkers. And while women computer professionals did not consider help from coworkers to be one of their most useful training method, their male colleagues rated it the third most important way to learn computing skills.

Gender differences in training ratings greatest among computer professionals

Although women and men ranked training methods differently within each occupational group, computer professionals showed the largest contrast. Women computer professionals had taken training similar to men's, but did not find the same things to be very important; considerably more women than men gave a high rating to employer-provided courses, on-the-job training, and self-paced video and CD-ROM training provided by their employer.

Academic research on computing culture suggests that many women feel isolated and hesitant to seek help in the male-dominated environment of computer education and work.³ According to the 2000 GSS, although men computer professionals seemed more likely than their women colleagues to highly rate informal help from a coworker and formal courses, the differences were not statistically significant.

Men have more experience with computers than women

Factors other than the ones already mentioned could also influence the way



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

men and women assess training methods. For example, research indicates that computer experience may have an impact on the kinds of training men and women find effective for learning computer skills.⁴ GSS data show that a larger percentage of men than women have access to a computer, use the Internet and rate their computer skills as excellent. Men also tend to score higher than women on a general technology use measure and have more years of experience with computers.

The type of work done, and the kinds of skills required for that work, may also influence people's assessments of the various methods for learning computing skills. A comparison of the skill level of computer activities identified has shown that women were more likely to be doing moderate skill level computer activities than men (47% of women, 35% of men), and less likely to be doing high skill level activities (53% of women, 65% of men).⁵

Men and women still rate training differently even when they have similar experience, skill and training

Because the experiences of men and women are often dissimilar, a multiple regression model was developed to see if the gender differences in training ratings held true after

-
3. Rasmussen and Håpnes.
 4. Fisher, A., J. Margolis and F. Miller. 1997. "Undergraduate women in computer science: Experience, motivation and culture." *SIGCSE Bulletin* 106-10.
 5. High skill is defined as data analysis, write computer programs, graphics or desk top publishing; moderate skill is defined as word processing, data entry, record keeping, using a spread sheet program, playing games, and using a CD-ROM encyclopedia or educational CD-ROMs. See also: Marshall, K. Summer 2001. "Working with computers." *Perspectives on Labour and Income* 2, 5 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-001-XIE).

| | Men | Women |
|---|-----|-------|
| | % | |
| Access to computer | 69 | 66 |
| Self-rated computer ability | | |
| Excellent | 15 | 8 |
| Very good | 19 | 22 |
| Good | 28 | 31 |
| Fair | 24 | 23 |
| Poor | 15 | 16 |
| Internet use in past 12 months | 56 | 50 |
| General technology use index ¹ | 3.8 | 3.5 |
| Average years of using computer | 7.5 | 7.1 |

1. See "What you should know about this study" for definition.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

accounting for differences in experience and skill.⁶

The results generally confirmed the differences already seen: women were significantly more likely than men to rate employer-provided courses, self-paced training, on-the-job training, and informal help from friends or family as very important. Men, on the other hand, rated trial-and-error higher than women. However, there was no significant difference in men's and women's ratings of manuals, on-line help and tutorials.

The regression analysis does suggest that age is an important factor in the way people choose to rank training methods. Among those 25 years and over, women in both high skilled jobs and all other occupations rated formal courses higher than did their male counterparts and than women in the computer professions; this did not hold true for workers under 25.

It is possible that younger computer professionals are in the process of taking formal computing courses or have just completed them. As such, they may rate the value of their training higher than older colleagues who did their formal training less recently and may find it less relevant to their current work.

When all other factors including gender are taken into account, computer professionals rated most methods higher than workers in highly skilled occupations; however, informal help from friends or family was less important to computer professionals than highly skilled workers. Interestingly, there were no statistically significant differences among the three occupational groups in the ratings given to the trial-and-error and self-paced methods of training, after controlling for other factors in the model.

Summary

Among computer users in the population aged 15 and over, a higher proportion of men than women used self-learning methods to acquire their

6. Variables in the model include experience with computers, skill level of work, number of training methods experienced, education, and occupation.

computer skills. Women, on the other hand, were more likely to employ formal methods such as on-the-job training as well as informal help from coworkers.

In assessing the importance of various kinds of computer training, both men and women in three broad occupational groups rated trial-and-error as the most important, and Web-based training as the least important, method. Overall, a higher proportion of women than men rated facilitated computer training as very important, while men tended to regard self-learning as very important. These findings suggest that employer-sponsored training is particularly valuable for women working with computers.



Heather Dryburgh is an analyst with Labour Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

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Statistics Canada's official release bulletin, every working day at 8:30 a.m. (Eastern time)



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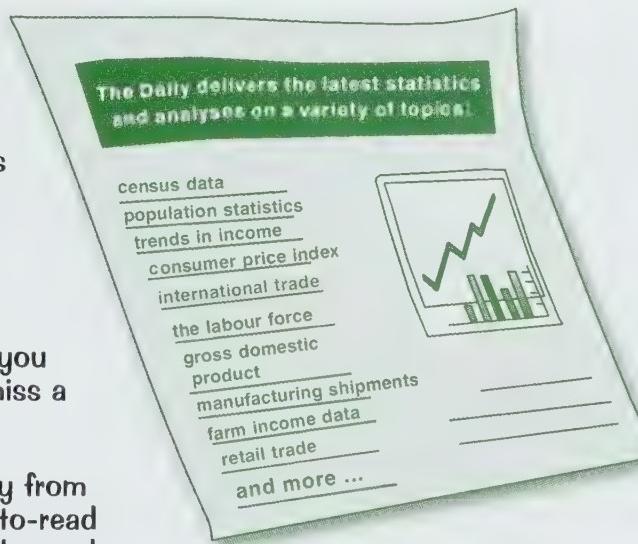


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After the layoff

Between 1993 and 1997, just over one million individuals were laid off from jobs in which they had at least one year of tenure. About three-quarters found a new job within a year but almost half took a pay cut and, for some, the success was short-lived. One year after a layoff, one in five individuals were unemployed, either because they had not found a new job or had lost one. Over the period, the time to find a new job after a layoff declined, reflecting the more favourable economic conditions at the end of the period and the more rapid adjustment by workers. Men under 35 and women under 25 had the best chance of finding a new job after a layoff; the odds decreased with age. Having been laid off from a long-duration job (one of at least five years) also decreased the likelihood of finding a new job. Professionals and managers were the most likely to find a new job after a layoff, whereas clerks, salespersons and those working in the service industry were the least likely to do so. Receipt of EI benefits tended to increase the duration of joblessness.

Perspectives on Labour and Income

Catalogue no. 75-001-XIE,
Vol. 2, No. 10



Anyone for a movie?

After four decades of decline, movie-going rebounded in the 1990s with a 60% rise between the beginning and the end of the decade. By 1999, attendance reached 111 million, the highest level in 39 years. New larger theatres opened in many parts of the country between 1991 and 1999, and the future of the film industry may depend on the profitability of these large theatres. In 1998-99, while small and medium theatres had a total loss of \$1 million, larger cinemas earned profits of \$75 million.

Focus on Culture

Catalogue no. 87-004-XPB,
Vol. 13, No. 1

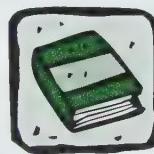


E-commerce: Household shopping on the Internet

Canadians more than doubled their on-line purchases of goods and services between 1999 and 2000. Households placed an average of 6.2 orders, representing approximately \$121 per order. Of every \$7 spent on-line, \$4 was used to purchase goods or services directly from Canadian sites. People were much more likely to buy clothing and less likely to purchase software or music. Ontario households spent \$529 million on-line, accounting for

almost half of the national total. Alberta followed with \$160 million, British Columbia with \$145 million and Quebec with \$144 million. Households that only window-shopped and did not order over the Internet expressed the highest level of concern about the security of on-line financial transactions: 80% compared with 75% of those that actually ordered or paid on-line.

The Daily, October 23, 2001



Maths and science

The *Third International Mathematics and Science Study* was designed to compare the teaching and learning of mathematics and science in elementary and secondary schools in 38 countries around the world. About 8,800 Canadian students from Grade 8 or the equivalent across 385 schools participated in the study. Results for Canada and each of the provinces were higher than the international average in both mathematics and science. In fact, out of 38 countries, only six scored significantly higher than Canada. In science, only five countries had scores that were significantly higher. No gender gap was found in mathematics but boys had higher science achievements than girls. Generally, Canadian students felt more positive towards mathematics and science than their counterparts in other countries.

Education Quarterly Review

Catalogue no. 81-003,
Vol. 7, No. 4



Potatoes and bananas top the list in 2000

Potatoes top the list as Canadians' preferred vegetable in 2000. Consumers ate just over 74 kg per person, either in fresh form or as processed products such as french fries, potato chips, instant or frozen mashed potatoes. Consumption of fresh vegetables, excluding potatoes, stood at about 68 kg per person, slightly below previous years, but up almost 5% from 1990. Lettuce, onions, carrots, tomatoes and cabbage all remained popular choices. Bananas topped the list of favourite fruits; each person consumed an average 13 kg. Apples were in second place at almost 11 kg per person and oranges reached 9 kg. Consumption of tropical fruits, such as guavas, mangoes, papaya and kiwi, levelled off in 2000 after gaining ground during the 1990s.

Consumption of oils and fats was nearly 32 kg per person, up from 22 kg in 1990. Much of this growth was due to higher use of canola, soybean, olive, and other speciality oils by households and food service outlets in salad dressings and commercial food preparations.

Food Consumption in Canada – Part II

Catalogue no. 32-230

SOCIAL INDICATORS

| | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| INCOME¹ | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Average market income</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Economic families ¹ | 51,450 | 50,192 | 51,328 | 51,527 | 52,204 | 53,689 | 56,190 | 56,998 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 20,773 | 20,175 | 20,152 | 20,449 | 20,211 | 20,209 | 21,121 | 22,038 | -- |
| <i>Average total income (includes transfer payments)</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Economic families ¹ | 58,802 | 57,605 | 58,666 | 58,592 | 59,451 | 60,772 | 63,247 | 63,818 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 25,943 | 25,512 | 25,726 | 25,634 | 25,414 | 25,431 | 26,289 | 27,058 | -- |
| <i>Average income tax</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Economic families ¹ | 11,338 | 11,077 | 11,556 | 11,625 | 11,701 | 12,028 | 12,708 | 12,346 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 4,616 | 4,582 | 4,693 | 4,668 | 4,569 | 4,465 | 4,800 | 4,994 | -- |
| <i>Average after-tax income</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Economic families ¹ | 47,465 | 46,528 | 47,110 | 46,967 | 47,750 | 48,744 | 50,539 | 51,473 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 21,327 | 20,930 | 21,033 | 20,965 | 20,845 | 20,966 | 21,488 | 22,064 | -- |
| <i>Average after-tax income by quintiles for families</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Lowest quintile | 17,811 | 17,721 | 18,128 | 18,096 | 17,665 | 17,640 | 18,110 | 19,056 | -- |
| 2 nd | 31,744 | 30,746 | 31,612 | 31,196 | 31,170 | 31,437 | 32,340 | 33,197 | -- |
| 3 rd | 43,333 | 42,116 | 43,050 | 42,322 | 43,154 | 43,520 | 44,804 | 45,652 | -- |
| 4 th | 56,627 | 55,516 | 56,010 | 55,580 | 56,721 | 57,701 | 59,569 | 60,805 | -- |
| Highest quintile | 87,812 | 86,556 | 86,765 | 87,654 | 90,048 | 93,445 | 97,881 | 98,657 | -- |
| <i>Earnings ratios (full-year, full-time workers)</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Dual-earners as % of husband-wife families | 61.3 | 60.3 | 60.4 | 60.5 | 61.5 | 63.4 | 63.6 | 64.0 | -- |
| Women's earnings as % of men's (full-year, full-time workers) | 71.9 | 72.3 | 69.8 | 73.1 | 73.0 | 69.6 | 72.2 | 69.9 | -- |
| <i>Prevalence (%) of low income after tax (1992 low income cut-offs)</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Families with head aged 65 and over | 2.6 | 4.0 | 2.5 | 2.1 | 2.9 | 3.7 | 3.5 | 2.2 | -- |
| Families with head less than 65 | 10.4 | 11.2 | 10.8 | 11.4 | 12.0 | 11.2 | 9.7 | 9.6 | -- |
| Two-parent families with children | 7.2 | 8.8 | 8.4 | 9.8 | 9.7 | 9.2 | 7.4 | 7.3 | -- |
| Lone-parent families | 41.1 | 41.3 | 42.2 | 42.4 | 45.2 | 42.1 | 36.7 | 36.9 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 30.5 | 30.9 | 30.4 | 30.5 | 32.6 | 31.9 | 30.1 | 29.9 | -- |
| FAMILIES^{2,3} | | | | | | | | | |
| Marriage rate (per 1,000 population) | 5.8 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 5.3 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 5.0 | -- |
| Crude divorce rate (per 1,000 population) | 2.8 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.3 | -- |
| Total number of families ('000) | 7,581 | 7,679 | 7,778 | 7,876 | 7,975 | 8,039 | 8,093 | 8,142 | 8,194 |
| <i>% of all families</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Husband-wife families | 86.7 | 86.4 | 86.1 | 85.8 | 85.5 | 85.2 | 84.9 | 84.6 | 84.2 |
| with children | 51.7 | 51.4 | 51.1 | 50.9 | 50.6 | 50.4 | 50.1 | 49.9 | 49.7 |
| without children | 35.1 | 35.0 | 35.0 | 34.9 | 34.9 | 34.8 | 34.7 | 34.7 | 34.6 |
| Lone-parent families | 13.3 | 13.6 | 13.9 | 14.2 | 14.5 | 14.8 | 15.1 | 15.4 | 15.8 |
| <i>% of husband-wife families</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| with children | 59.6 | 59.5 | 60.2 | 60.2 | 59.2 | 59.1 | 59.1 | 59.0 | 59.0 |
| all children under 18 | 67.0 | 66.6 | 66.2 | 65.8 | 65.4 | 65.0 | 64.6 | 64.2 | 63.8 |
| Females as % of lone-parent families | 82.6 | 82.7 | 82.8 | 83.0 | 83.1 | 83.2 | 83.3 | 83.4 | 83.4 |

-- Figure not available.

1. All incomes are in 1999 constant dollars. An economic family consists of two or more people who live in the same dwelling and are related by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption.

2. Excluding the Territories.

3. A census family is referred to as immediate or nuclear family consisting of married or common-law couples with or without children, or lone parents and their children, whereas a child does not have his or her own spouse residing in the household.

Sources: *Income in Canada* (Catalogue no. 75-202-XPE), *Income Trends in Canada* (Catalogue no. 13F0022-XCB), *Annual Demographic Statistics* (Catalogue no. 91-213-XPB) and *Divorces* (Catalogue no. 84F0213-XPB).

LESSON PLAN

Suggestions for using Canadian Social Trends in the classroom

Lesson plan for "Learning computer skills"

Objectives

- To become more aware of each individual's learning style.
- To discuss different learning methods.

Method

1. Survey the class to determine the top five computer skills that students have. Do computer skills of boys and girls differ? Ask the class how each skill was acquired. Do the learning methods differ for girls and boys?
2. Ask the students if they learn computer skills more easily when they are learning with others or by themselves. Is there a difference between boys and girls? Discuss why this might be.
3. Ask the students to interview parents or other family members about their computer learning experiences: the method they like best, and use most, to keep pace with changes in their field.
4. Ask the students if any of them plan to become computer professionals (e.g., systems analysts, computer programmers, software engineers, Web masters). How would they go about getting the skills needed to become a computer professional?
5. Ask the boys in the class "If you had to learn a new programming language to complete a school assignment, how would you go about learning it?" Ask the girls the same question and compare how learning methods differ.

Using other resources

- Read the *Canadian Social Trends* articles "Learning on your own" (Spring 2001) and "Kids and Teens on the Net" (Autumn 2001). The articles are available at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/social.htm>. Teachers can access over 15 lessons for use with computer technology courses and over 250 lessons in all at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/teach.htm>. One of these lessons, the "Statistics Canada Web page contest," encourages students to display data in creative ways based on data in the STC Web site. The Web page should display data visually and illustrate conclusions that can be drawn from the data. A \$100 prize is given for the best Web page prepared by a student for each grade level.

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Educators

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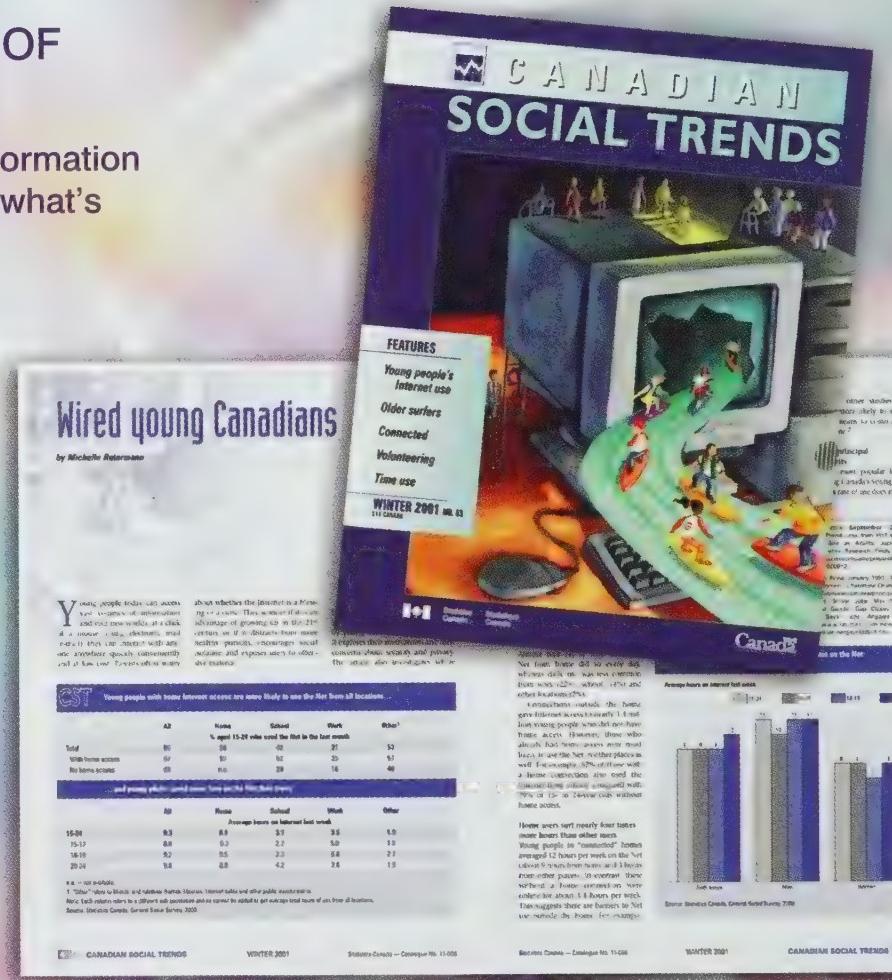
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CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS

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Cover illustrator

Born in China, **Nan Jiang** received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Fine Arts. Jiang immigrated to Canada in 1992 and has been working as a visual artist and illustrator. His work has been shown in many galleries and collected by art communities and private collectors. He currently resides in Ottawa, Ontario.



Better things to do or dealt out of the game? Internet dropouts and infrequent users

by Susan Crompton, Jonathan Ellison and Kathryn Stevenson

The Internet promises to become one of the principal ways by which both governments and businesses will communicate with their citizens and their customers. But in 2000, 42% of Canadians aged 15 and over had never used the Internet. Furthermore, over 5% were Internet dropouts — people who haven't used the Net for at least one year; another 5% had gone on the Net in the past year, but used it rarely and had not surfed in the past month at all. Is it reasonable to make the Net a major conduit of information among individuals, governments and businesses when this new communication technology has not been adopted uniformly throughout society?

Previous studies have shown that women are less experienced computer users than men¹ and that people with higher incomes and education are most likely to be connected to the Net.² According to new data, Internet dropouts and infrequent users are more likely to be employed and more likely to be women than people who use the Net regularly (five or more hours a week). They are also less likely to live in households with incomes over \$60,000 a year or to have a postsecondary education. While these facts may explain why people are unable to adopt Internet technology, they do not explain why they fail to maintain it. This article examines the characteristics of Internet dropouts and infrequent users and compares them with Canadians who use the Net regularly. It also asks why some people have not been swept away by the Internet wave.

Why aren't they surfing?

According to the 2000 Household Internet Use Survey (HIUS), just over 813,000 of all Canadian households

that have ever used the Internet reported that they no longer did. Over one-quarter of these dropout households (232,500) had used the Internet regularly during a typical month, with over half surfing the Net at least once a week. By far the most common reason that they had dropped out was that they had "no need" of the Internet (30% of dropout households).³ This suggests that the World Wide Web either did not have what these people were looking for, or that they were content to use more conventional sources of information that do not demand expensive equipment or special skills. It may also indicate lack of time or difficulty finding what they were searching for.

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1. Dryburgh, H. Spring 2002. "Learning computer skills." *Canadian Social Trends*.
 2. Dickinson, P. and J. Ellison. Winter 1999. "Plugged into the Internet." *Canadian Social Trends*.
 3. There is no common understanding of what "no need" means. Respondents could have interpreted this phrase to mean any number of situations.

This article uses data from the 2000 Household Internet Use Survey (HIUS) and the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) on access to and use of information communication technology. The HIUS, introduced in 1997 to measure the adoption of Internet services by Canadian households, collects data from approximately 34,000 private households in the 10 provinces. In 2000, the questionnaire included a brief series of questions for households that had used the Internet on a regular basis in the past but no longer do so. Because the objective of the HIUS is to collect data at the household level, information about the behaviour of individual members of the household is not available. This missing piece of the puzzle is addressed by the 2000 GSS, which collected detailed information about the individual's use of technology, allowing researchers to focus on personal use of the Internet. GSS data were collected over a 12-month period from January to December 2000 from almost 25,100 respondents aged 15 and over living in private households in all 10 provinces.

The definition of user differs between the HIUS and the GSS and cannot be reconciled because of the way the data were collected. Despite these

differences, both surveys taken together shed light on many Internet-related issues. To keep the definitional distinctions as clear as possible, however, this article uses the HIUS data for information about the reasons why households stopped using the Internet, while GSS data are used for all other characteristics.

Dropout household: a household that once used the Internet in a typical month, regardless of the location of use (home, work, school, library, etc.), but no longer does. A typical month refers to a month that is not out of the ordinary for the household, usually in the past year, as determined by the respondent.

Regular users: individuals who have spent at least five hours on the Internet in the past week, regardless of the location of use (home, work, school, library, friend's or relative's house, any other location).

Infrequent users: individuals who have not used the Internet from any location in the past month, but have used it at some time in the past 12 months.

Dropouts: individuals who have not used the Internet from any location for at least 12 months.

Some 17% of households that had previously used the Net regularly dropped out because it was too expensive and 14% did so because they lost access to a computer. These reasons are similar to those given by Net dropouts in the United States: in September 2000, 11% of American dropouts said they had quit the Net because their connection had proved too costly and 21% said they no longer had a personal computer.⁴

Lack of experience more common to infrequent users

A person's degree of comfort or familiarity with new technologies may play a role in their decision to use the Net. Infrequent users and dropouts do score

somewhat lower on the technology use index than regular users, suggesting the fewer of these devices people use, the less likely they are to use other types of technologies.⁵ Although only a small percentage of Canadian

households that had dropped out cited difficulty or complexity as their reason for giving up on the Net, some of the earlier U.S. research identified complexity and frustration as one of the principal barriers to access.⁶ Given

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4. Lenhart, A. September 2000. *Who's not online: 57% of those without Internet access say they do not plan to log on*. Pew Internet & American Life Project. <http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/reports.asp>. (Accessed October 9, 2001.)
 5. The technology use index measures people's use of a fax machine, cell phone, ATM, answering machine, pager, cable TV, satellite dish and DVD.
 6. Katz, J.E., Ph.D. and P. Aspden, Ph.D. *Social and Public Policy Internet Research: Goals and Achievements*. Presentation given February 2, 1998 to the University of Michigan School of Information. http://www.communitytechnology.org/aspden/aspden_talk.html. (Accessed October 9, 2001); Lievrouw, L. July 1999. "Nonobvious things about communication technology: The case of Internet dropouts." *New Media*. http://www.icahdq.org/publications/newsletter1/july_99/july_newmedia.html. (Accessed October 9, 2001.)

| | Regular users | Infrequent users | Dropouts |
|---|---------------|------------------|-----------|
| Total | 5,272,200 | 1,086,830 | 1,257,200 |
| % of population aged 15 and over | 21 | 4 | 5 |
| % female | 39 | 58 | 54 |
| Average age (years) | 34 | 36 | 37 |
| Technology Use Index (maximum = 8.0) | 4.7 | 4.2 | 4.0 |
| % with annual household income \$60,000 or over ¹ | 54 | 38 | 31 |
| % with more than high school education | 75 | 68 | 61 |
| % with home Internet connection | 89 | 36 | 20 |
| Main activity in past 12 months (%) | | | |
| Work | 63 | 70 | 67 |
| School | 26 | 13 | 9 |
| Child care, household work, maternity/paternity leave | 4 | 9 | 10 |
| Retired | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Other ² | 3 | 4 | 6 |

1. Includes only households that reported.

2. Includes looking for work, long-term illness and other reasons.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

the improvement and proliferation of search engines in recent years, these issues may no longer present a serious impediment to potential users, but the original research does suggest that inexperience may play a role in deciding not to use the Internet.

Indeed, according to the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS), infrequent users are more recent, and therefore less experienced, users: 40% have learned to navigate the Net within the last year, compared with only 14% of regular users.⁷ As they gain more experience, infrequent users may then move on to more regular use or drop out, depending on how useful they find the Internet.

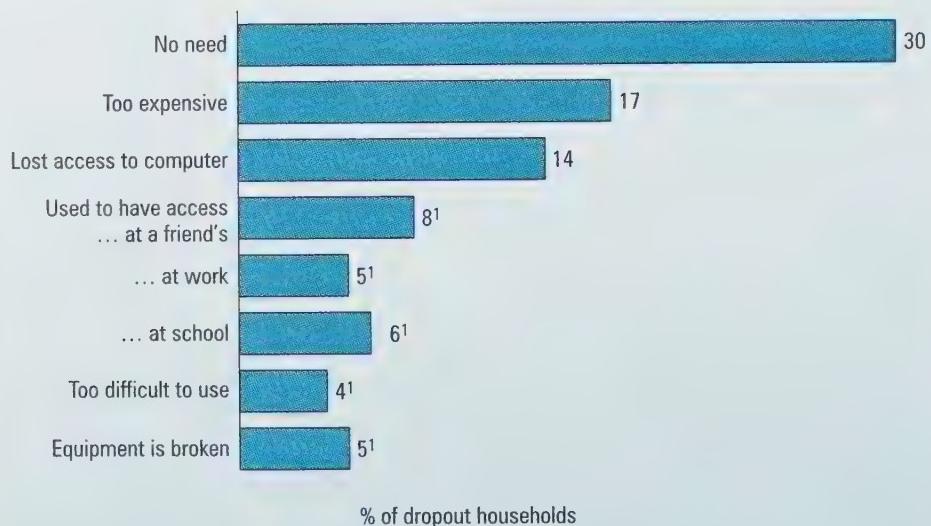
Being comfortable with surfing the Net is undoubtedly linked to the user's level of comfort using a PC. Infrequent users were not nearly as likely as regular Net users to perform activities such as word processing, bookkeeping, data entry and analysis, and game playing. Not surprisingly, only 20% of infrequent users described their computer skills as very good or excellent, in contrast with 57% of regular Internet users.

American researchers have reported that people who learned how to use the Net from family or friends were more likely to drop out than people who were taught in the workplace or were self-taught.⁸ GSS results suggest that Canadian users are similar: regular Net users were more likely than infrequent users to rate formal training (e.g. courses) and self-teaching as important tools for acquiring computer skills.⁹

CST

Dropout households most often say they do not need the Internet

Reasons for dropping out



1. Subject to high sampling variability.

Note: In dropout households, at least one household member had once regularly used the Internet in a typical month.

Source: Statistics Canada, Household Internet Use Survey, 2000.

7. Data are not available for dropouts because the question was not asked of respondents who had not used the Internet in the previous 12 months.

8. Katz and Aspden. op. cit.

9. For more information on learning methods and preferences, see Dryburgh, H. Spring 2002. "Learning computer skills." *Canadian Social Trends*.

Have they dropped out for good?

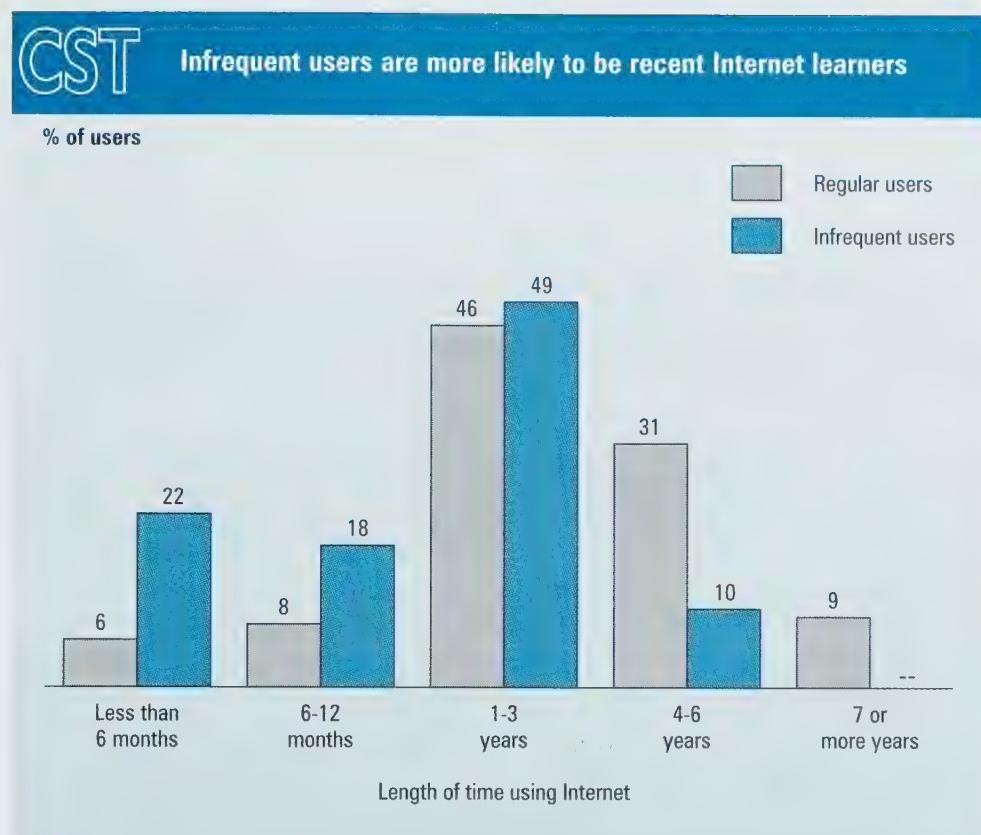
According to the 2000 HIUS, a total of 813,000 households that had previously used the Internet (both typical and non-typical users) had since abandoned it. Can they be enticed back? It's not certain. Only about 28% of them believed that, in the coming year, they would return to using the Net on a regular basis. And of those that did envision returning to regular use, the majority (67%) intended to do their surfing from home. Other locations — such as work, school or public library — were not nearly as conducive to a return to regular surfing, probably because they are simply too inconvenient for one reason or another.

Interestingly, over 368,000 households that no longer used the Net had a PC at home but 62% of them had no intention of accessing the Net again in the next year. Almost one-quarter didn't think it was useful or else didn't need it; one-fifth said it was too expensive and almost as many had no interest in the Internet. One reason was technological: the PC was too old to support the technology (16%). Others were so pressed for time that they believed they would not have time to use the Net (14%) even if they were connected.

Who hasn't used the Net at all?

According to the 2000 GSS, 42% (about 10.3 million) of Canadian adults have never used the Internet. Although non-users are quite different from Net users, many of these differences stem from the fact that non-users are considerably older: almost 75% are aged 40 or over and their average age is 54. Almost half are homemakers, retired or caring for children; over half are women. Non-users are also less technologically inclined than users, scoring an average of 3.1 out of 8.0 on the technology use index, while regular users score 4.7.

Only 22% of all non-users are interested in learning to use the Net. The top three reasons they give for not learning



-- Sample too small to provide reliable estimate.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

are cost, lack of access to a computer or to the Internet and not having enough time. When non-users not interested in the Net are asked if they would want to learn if the Net were available in a library or other public place — thus removing some of the barriers to learning — three-quarters still say no. Almost half are not interested, one in 10 cite lack of skills or training, and the remainder report various other reasons such as not having enough time, lack of privacy and excessive waiting time.

Summary

The main reason people say they stop using the Internet is that they discover they don't need it. Other common reasons include losing access to the Net or to the computer they were using to access it. The expense of being connected is also too much for some people to manage — users who do drop out tend to have fewer financial resources. Furthermore, their Internet needs may be fairly low-level, for example using e-mail, and their incentive

may not be as great as that of someone who uses the Net for a wider range of activities. With younger people using the Internet for an increasing number of purposes, one might expect that they will continue to do so over a lifetime, provided they have easy access. As a younger generation replaces the less interested and computer-savvy older generation, it is probable that the Net will become just as common a communication technology as radio, television and the telephone.



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Time or money? How high and low income Canadians spend their time

by Cara Williams

Time — all men neglect it; all regret the loss of it; nothing can be done without it.

— Voltaire

Our supply of time is absolute. There are 24 hours in a day — no more, no less. Neither technological advance nor the passage of the centuries has altered this. Yet virtually every one of us has wished for more time to spend with our families, to complete a project at work or school, to enjoy our vacations, or simply to relax. While at the beginning of the 20th century money may have been the scarcest commodity, in the latter half, time has become the scarcest resource.¹ Indeed, by the end of the 1990s, we had a level of prosperity that was unrivaled in history — but this was accompanied by a pace of life that, according to many, was much too hectic.

Just how hectic life gets depends on many factors, one being income. Our incomes affect, among other things, the neighbourhood and housing we



What you should know about this study

Data in this article come from the 1998 General Social Survey (GSS) on time use. The survey interviewed almost 11,000 Canadians aged 15 and over in the 10 provinces and provided information on how people spent their time during one day. In addition to information about time use, the 1998 GSS also asked general questions about the perception of time.

Individuals included in this article are aged 25 to 54 years, the ones most likely to be in the labour force, to have families and significant demands on their time. For purposes of this study, people were classified as high income if their total household income was equal to or greater than \$80,000 and low income if their total household income was \$30,000 or less. Using these definitions, approximately 2.4 million Canadians live in high income and 1.9 million in low income households. While virtually all working-age adults in high income households are employed (97%), a notably smaller proportion (72%) of those with low incomes work at a job or business.¹

1. Respondents are considered employed if they reported working at a job or business in the last week or during the past 12 months.

live in, the holidays we choose, the activities we engage in and the time we spend on these activities. Our incomes may also be related to the

1. Sharp, C. 1981. *The Economics of Time*. Oxford: Martin Robertson and Company Ltd. p. 18.

number of hours we spend on paid work and household chores, the amount of time we devote to playing with our children, and the time we have left for leisure. Is there any truth to the oft-quoted phrase, "you either have time or money, but not both"? This article uses the 1998 General Social Survey (GSS) to examine the activities and time use of Canadians aged 25 to 54 in high and low income households.

High income Canadians spend more time on paid work

According to popular wisdom from the 1950s, "computers and automation were going to create abundant wealth... and... would free us from the drudgery of work."² Many believed that by the 20th century's end we would be working a three-day week with plenty of free time to spend at our leisure. By the time the century ended, visions of a three-day work week had vanished. In many Canadian families both parents are now in the work force, resulting in additional stress as they struggle to juggle the often-competing time demands of family, home and work.

Most employed Canadians aged 25 to 54 spend the largest portion of their waking day doing paid work. While this is true for individuals in both high and low income households, those with high income spend an average of 15% more time on their paid job:³ 46 hours compared with 40 hours spent by those with low income.

The majority of employed Canadians in high income households (56%) report being satisfied with the number of hours they work in their current arrangement, while 20% would prefer to work fewer hours for less pay. Only about 8% were willing to work more hours for more pay. Paid employees from low income households felt quite differently. Nearly one-third stated that they would be



High income Canadians are more likely to work longer hours and more weeks

| | Aged 25 to 54 | |
|---|---------------|------------|
| | High income | Low income |
| Total (millions) | 2.4 | 1.9 |
| % employed during the last 12 months | 97 | 72 |
| Average number of hours worked in the last week | 46 | 40 |
| Average number of weeks worked in the last year | 50 | 41 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.



Low income Canadians spend considerably more time on housework

| | Aged 25 to 54 | |
|--|-------------------------|------------|
| | High income | Low income |
| Time spent on... | Average minutes per day | |
| Housework | 30 | 50 |
| Meal preparation | 40 | 52 |
| Shopping | 48 | 51 |
| Personal care including sleeping (hours) | 9.8 | 10.1 |
| Leisure | 277 | 317 |
| Watching television | 82 | 132 |
| Child care ¹ | 68 | 82 |
| Playing with child | 17 | 18 |
| Teaching child | 4 | 9 |
| Reading to or talking with child | 4 | 5 |

1. Refers only to individuals with children living in the household.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

willing to work more hours for more pay, while only 6% said they wanted to work less time for less pay.

Low income Canadians spend more time on unpaid work

Unpaid work such as housework and home maintenance take up much of the time left after paid work is done. While people from high income households spend more hours on paid work, low income individuals expend considerably more time on unpaid chores. For example, low income Canadians aged 25 to 54 spend

50 minutes a day on housework, while those with high income perform these tasks for just 30 minutes; similarly meal preparation takes up 52 minutes of low income people's time, but only 40 minutes of a high income individual's day.⁴

2. O'Hara, B. 1993. *Working Harder isn't Working*. Vancouver: New Star Books. p. 1.

3. Refers to individuals who were working at a job or business in the past seven days.

4. Daily times for these activities are averaged over seven days.

The 20th century was a period of enormous technological advance. A great number of devices — cars, washing machines, dryers, microwave ovens and computers, to name just a few — were invented during this time specifically to make certain tasks easier and less time consuming. But the extra time these products afford us seems to be offset by the increasing number of activities we do and things we have. For example, in his book, *The Tyranny of Time*, Robert Banks observes that “food preparation and ironing take less time owing to the introduction of pre-prepared foods and non-iron fabrics. But such gains are offset by the fact that, among the middle class particularly, homes and gardens are larger, material possessions requiring maintenance and services are more numerous, and standards of personal and household presentability are higher.”¹

These changes have been likened to an endless spiral. As early as 1970 one social commentator observed that economic growth entails a general increase in the scarcity of time. In addition to growing requirements for the care and maintenance of our ever-increasing consumption goods, “swelling expectations lead to a constant effort to keep up with the latest products.... With so many things to use, and the need to work harder to obtain them, our lives grow more harried and pressured.”²

Indeed, technological advances have allowed us to squeeze more and more activity into our waking hours. Many of us “multi-task” our way through the day. We discuss business over the cell phone as we drive to work, eat “fast food” at our desk in the office, or conduct meetings over lunch. After work we rush home to prepare dinner, attempt to have quality time with our children, drive them to their activities and do the shopping before picking them up again. Back at home we help with homework while doing the wash, then late at night start reviewing the report we brought home from the office. We have little time to relax and often cut down on badly needed sleep to get things done.

1. Banks, R. 1983. *The Tyranny of Time — When 24 Hours Is Not Enough*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press. p. 82-83.

2. De Graffe, J., D. Wann and T.H. Naylor. 2001. *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publisher Inc. p. 44.

Of course, because of their better financial situation, high income Canadians are more likely to purchase cleaning services and eat at restaurants. Indeed, on an average day in 1998, about 25% of high income Canadians ate at least one restaurant

meal compared with about 13% of those from low income households.

Although many people find shopping a chore, most Canadians between 25 and 54 spend a fair amount of time on this activity, regardless of income: low income individuals, an average of

about 51 minutes a day and high income people about 48 minutes a day. Of this time, between 8 and 10 minutes is spent grocery shopping and approximately 12 to 16 minutes on making other everyday purchases such as clothing and gas.⁵

More than 8 in 10 high income Canadians feel rushed

Perhaps as a result of the types of jobs they have, or because they spend a larger part of their day at paid work, Canadians with high incomes are more likely to feel pressed for time than their low income counterparts: 84% feel rushed at least a few times a week, compared with 73% of individuals in low income households. While weekdays tend to be more hectic, for many Canadians, juggling responsibilities is a problem that continues into the weekend. Nearly 60% of high income and about 47% of low income individuals feel rushed every day, including Saturday and Sunday.

Although low income Canadians are less likely to feel pressed for time, a substantial proportion still feel this way, suggesting that the pace of society and its associated stresses affect Canadians from all walks of life. These results contradict theories that suggest low income individuals are not caught up in the time vortex.

If given more time, both high and low income Canadians would spend it on similar types of activities. For example, 36% of Canadians in high income households reported wanting to spend more time with family and friends, while 19% would relax. Among those in low income households, 33% would spend any more time they had on family and friends and 15% on relaxing.

5. The rest of shopping time is spent on the purchase of other goods and services such as car maintenance, finances and personal care services.

Little time left to spend exclusively with children

Families are often the ones most affected by the scarcity of time. Work, family and community responsibilities frequently collide, leaving parents feeling guilty about "getting it all done and remorse that they have not done enough with their children and families."⁶ Unheard of 30 years ago, many homes today have a special family calendar to schedule work, school and leisure activities.

Overall, low income Canadians aged 25 to 54 spend more time on child care at 82 minutes a day than their high income counterparts, at about 68 minutes a day.⁷ But as all parents can attest, much of child care is done while engaging in other activities such as cleaning, cooking or watching television. Considerably less time is devoted to exclusive interaction with children. In both low and high income households, parents report spending under 5 minutes a day reading or talking with their children and less than 20 minutes a day playing with them. However, low income parents devote more time to teaching or helping their children, at about 9 minutes a day, than do parents with high income who do so for approximately 4 minutes a day.⁸

Less leisure time for high income Canadians

The concept of leisure is difficult to pin down. An activity that for some is leisure (e.g. gardening, baking, building a shed) is, for others, unpaid work. Even sociologists find defining leisure somewhat difficult. Some see it as "a quality of experience" while others regard leisure as a "portion of one's time."⁹ While gauging the quality of a person's time use cannot be done with GSS data, it is possible to examine leisure as a portion of time.

On an average day, 25- to 54-year-old Canadians from high income households spend about 40 minutes less on



High income Canadians are more likely to attend concerts and go to museums

| In the last 12 months did you... | % |
|--|----------------|
| Read for leisure | |
| Newspapers | 95 |
| Magazines | 87 |
| Books | 73 |
| Go to conservation or nature parks | 66 |
| Attend a concert | 55 |
| Go to a historic site | 51 |
| Go to a zoo/planetarium | 50 |
| Engage in a sport | 49 |
| Improve knowledge through books, TV, computer or talking | 48 |
| Go to a museum/art gallery | 48 |
| Attend a cultural/artistic festival | 32 |
| Go to the library (as leisure) | 31 |
| Do crafts or woodworking | 29 |
| Attend other stage performances | 24 |
| Play a musical instrument | 22 |
| Attend a cultural/heritage performance | 18 |
| Do any visual arts | 12 |
| Take photographs (for art) | 10 |
| Write prose or poetry (for leisure) | 8 |
| Sing | 8 |
| Choreograph or dance | 6 |
| | 4 ¹ |

1. Subject to high sampling variability.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

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6. Daly, K. 2000. *It Keeps Getting Faster: Changing Pattern of Time in Families*. The Vanier Institute of the Family. www.vifamily.ca/cft/daly/dalye.htm. p. 2. (Accessed March 21, 2002.)
 7. This is an average and includes time spent with all children up to age 15. Not surprisingly, individuals with small children spend more time on child care. For more information, see C. Silver, Summer 2000. "Being there: The time dual-earner couples spend with their children." *Canadian Social Trends*.
 8. These findings support figures in the United States which show that Americans spend about 6 hours a week shopping and about 40 minutes each week playing with their kids. Taking a weekly average, both high and low income Canadians spend 6 hours shopping but under 2 hours a week playing with their children. De Graffe, J., D. Wann and T.H. Naylor. 2001. *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publisher, Inc.
 9. Wilson, J. 1980. "Sociology of leisure." *Annual Review of Sociology* 6: 21-40.

leisure than their low income counterparts: 4.6 hours versus 5.3 hours.¹⁰ Of this time, sports and hobbies take up about 57 minutes of high income and 49 minutes of low income people's time, while reading books or newspapers constitutes 23 and 18 minutes, respectively. Both groups spend most of their leisure time watching television (high income people 82 and low income people 132 minutes a day). This, despite the fact that in addition to traditional hobbies, the computer and Internet now also compete for scarce leisure minutes.¹¹

Attending events and participating in activities may also be influenced by income. According to the GSS, high income Canadians had been twice as likely as low income individuals to attend a concert or participate regularly in sports in the preceding 12 months. People from high income households are also more likely to attend cultural or artistic festivals, or go to museums or art galleries.¹² The availability of funds, rather than differing interests between the two groups, may be responsible for these disparities.

On the other hand, similarities also exist in how the two groups spend their leisure time. For example, individuals in both high and low income households are equally likely to use the library, do crafts or woodworking, sing or participate in recreational dance.

Summary

Canadians from low and high income households live in a complex, fast-paced world. While high income individuals spend more time on paid work, those with low income devote more time to unpaid work activities. High income adults feel considerably more rushed and have less time for leisure. And whether living in a high or low income household, parents have little time left to spend with their children. This is one reason why adults in both groups report wishing they could spend more time with family and friends.

10. Daily times are averaged over the week and include Saturdays and Sundays.
11. Indeed, more than 30% of Internet users stated that because of being on the Internet they spend less time watching television. Williams, C. Winter 2001. "Connected to the Internet, still connected to life?" *Canadian Social Trends*.
12. Respondents were asked if they had participated in these activities during the past 12 months.



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A little place in the country: A profile of Canadians who own vacation property

by Frances Kremarik

An idyllic television scene shows a cottage on the lake or a cabin in the woods with families frolicking about. While for some a vacation home may be either of these, for others it could be a condominium in the heart

of a city. But no matter what form it takes, a vacation home is a place where one can go to relax and enjoy life.

Although owning a second home in the country was historically a privilege reserved for the wealthy, the wish to

own a residence outside the city was not limited to the elite. Indeed, after the Second World War, middle-class families began to purchase or build vacation homes away from their urban residence. For many Canadian second

CST What you should know about this study

The Survey of Financial Security (SFS) interviewed approximately 23,000 households in May and June of 1999. It collected general information on household demographics, education, employment and income for household members aged 15 and older, and asset and debt information for the household as a whole. Respondents were asked if they owned a secondary property or properties (a property that is not their principal residence), its value, and if the property was located inside or outside Canada. The survey did not collect data on vacation properties in Canada owned by residents of other countries.

Vacation/second home: respondents were asked to identify the type of property that they owned, including vacation home/second home and timeshares. As it is not possible to distinguish between a second home and a vacation home, for the purposes of this article, these terms are considered synonymous.

Household: refers to economic families and unattached individuals. An economic family is defined as a group of individuals sharing a common dwelling and related by blood, marriage, common-law union or adoption. Unattached individuals are persons living alone or with persons to whom they are not related.

Income: refers to the after-tax income of the entire household.

Wealth: the difference between the monetary value of the household's assets and the value of its debts. The value of the vacation home has been excluded from the total wealth calculation in order to compare wealth between second home owners and those households that do not own a vacation home. The data exclude households where wealth equals zero. In this article wealth excludes the value of employer pension plan benefits.

home owners, the popular spots tend to be located on the beach, by the sea or a lake, or in the mountains. Others, older Canadians in particular, sometimes purchase a second home or timeshare in warmer climates outside the country in an effort to get away from the cold Canadian winters.

Using data from the 1999 Survey of Financial Security (SFS), this article examines some of the characteristics of Canadian households who own a vacation home.

Who owns a vacation home?

Why do so many Canadians wish to go to a cottage for the weekend? It may be the allure of a good time, the need to get back to nature or, as some research shows, the status that cottage ownership brings.¹

But while many people may entertain the notion of having a second home, the rate of vacation home ownership has changed very little over the last 30 years. In 1977 just under 6% of households (464,000) owned vacation homes, and by 1999 the ownership rate

had increased only slightly to about 7% of households (823,000). In 1999, the vast majority (77%) of these households owned a property in Canada, while 21% had second homes outside the country. Another 2% of these households owned property both inside and outside Canada.

While many may think that a vacation home comes with children swimming and running about, the reality is that the majority of them are not owned by families with children living at home. This is not surprising, given that the average age of a second home owner in Canada is 52 years.² If these individuals have children, many may be grown and living in households of their own. Indeed just over one-quarter (26%) of Canadian-owned vacation homes belong to households with children, while over half (52%) are owned by couples without children and other household types. Another 22% belong to seniors.

Even though households with children are less likely than those without children to own second homes, this

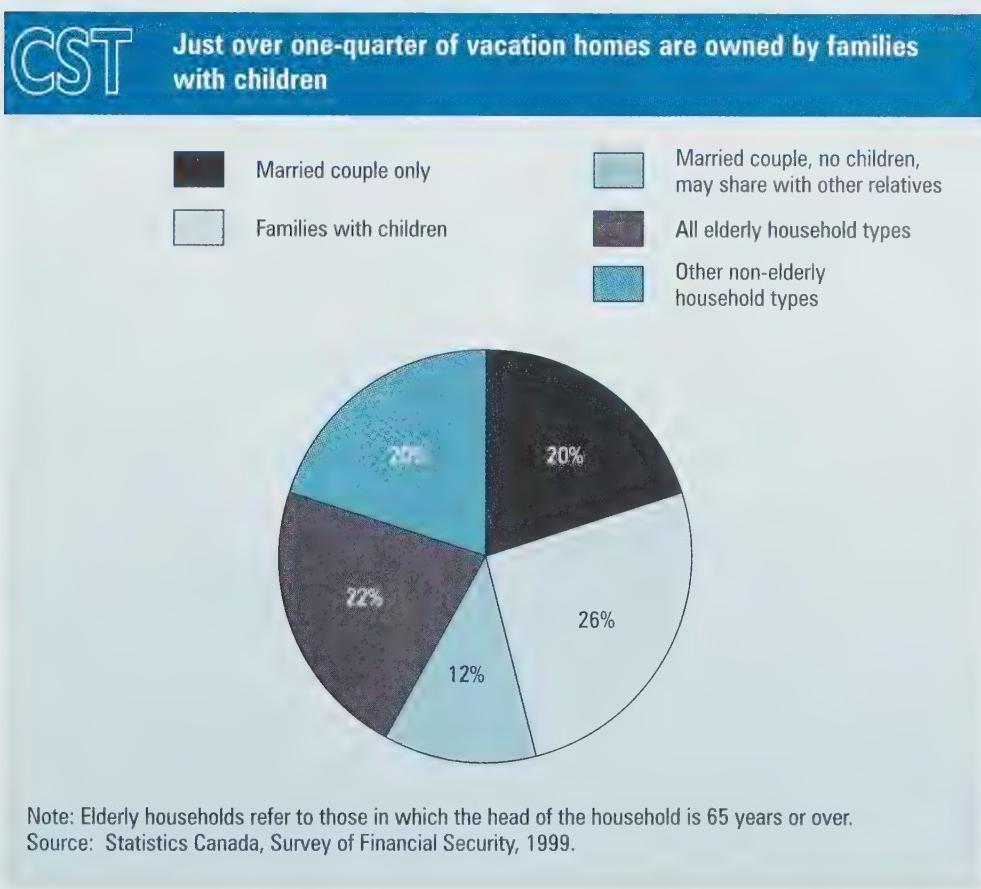
does not mean that they do not have access to a vacation property. Indeed, a second home may be owned by an older parent who then provides access to their children and grandchildren. Also, some families may rent a cottage rather than purchase one. Data from the Canadian Travel Survey indicate that there were more than one million person-trips to commercial cottages and cabins in 1999.³

Rates of second home ownership in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and Ontario are similar to the Canadian average at around 7%. In Western Canada, the rate is somewhat lower at about 5%.

While it is not possible to determine the location of vacation properties within Canada using data from the 1999 SFS, it is possible to find out where the households who own them are located. Not surprisingly, urban households own almost 9 out of 10 second homes. Undoubtedly, many of these vacation properties serve as a retreat from hectic city life.

The economics of ownership

Since so few Canadian households actually own a second home, it is useful to examine the characteristics that may distinguish these households from non-owners. Not surprisingly, income is a strong indicator of ownership. The average after-tax income of a vacation home owner in 1999 was about \$55,000; this compares to about \$39,000 for those who did not own



1. Coppock, J.T. 1977. *Second Homes: Curse or Blessing?* Oxford: Pergamon Press.
2. U.S. research shows that people this age are the most likely to purchase a second home. *Realty Times*. May 9, 2000.
3. This may underestimate the total number of cottage rentals, since the Canadian Travel Survey only looks at trips of at least 80 kilometres and many individuals may rent cottages closer to home. Additionally, many cottage rentals are private and may not be included in the totals.

| | Owns vacation home | |
|------------------------|--------------------|------|
| Average | Yes | No |
| | \$ 000 | |
| After-tax income | 55 | 39 |
| Family wealth | 285 | 181 |
| Value of primary home | 186 | 154 |
| Value of vacation home | 88 | n.a. |

Note: Wealth excludes the value of the vacation home and the value of employer pension plan benefits. Excludes households reporting wealth equal to zero.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Financial Security, 1999.

more than 60% were owned by households in the top two quintiles. This supports the belief that a vacation home is more likely to be the privilege of the wealthy.

While the notion of vacation home ownership may bring to mind images of a rustic cottage or cabin, the data indicate that the value of these homes is considerable. In 1999, the average value of second homes owned by Canadian households was over \$88,000, suggesting that some of these homes are located on valuable land and that many are far more than rustic getaways.

| Vacation home owner household | Family wealth ¹ | After-tax income | Value of primary home ² |
|---|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | Average \$ 000 | |
| Elderly ³ married couple, no other relatives | 537 | 52 | 177 |
| Married couple with children | 429 | 72 | 230 |
| Married couple | 382 | 53 | 173 |
| Married couple, no children, may share with other relatives | 400 | 77 | 183 |
| Unattached individuals | 192 | 29 | 135 |

1. Wealth excludes the value of the vacation home and the value of employer pension plan benefits. Excludes households reporting wealth equal to zero.

2. Value of primary home excludes cases where the value was not indicated.

3. "Elderly" refers to those aged 65 years and over.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Financial Security, 1999.

a second home. Looked at in terms of concentration, nearly 6 in 10 (469,000) Canadian-owned vacation homes belonged to households in the top two income quintiles and only 2 in 10 (177,000) to those in the lowest two quintiles.

While vacation homes are more likely to be owned by those with high incomes, wealth may also be an important indicator of second home ownership. This can be seen clearly when considering that many second homes are owned by older Canadians. While these individuals might have

lower incomes if they are no longer in the work force, their wealth could be substantial.

Indeed, the data show that the average wealth of vacation home owners is substantially higher than that of non-owners. Even after excluding the value of the vacation home from their total wealth, vacation home owners' average wealth is 60% higher than that of households that are not owners — \$285,000, compared with \$181,000. As with income, only 20% of vacation homes were owned by households in the lowest two wealth quintiles, while

Summary

Relatively few Canadian households actually own a vacation home. The ability to own a vacation property is influenced by many factors, two of which are income and wealth: not surprisingly, vacation home owners have higher average incomes and wealth than other households. Although cottages and children are often thought of together, only about one-quarter of second homes are owned by households with children. However, it appears that many Canadians enjoy a taste of cottage life without paying the high cost of purchasing or maintaining a vacation home.

Further, given the average age of second home owners, it is reasonable to assume that many of these homes may be passed down to or inherited by the owner's children. This inter-generational transfer of wealth will be interesting to follow as properties change hands from one generation to the next.



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Ontario Grade 3 student achievement

by Stéphane Tremblay, Nancy Ross and Jean-Marie Berthelot

This article is adapted from "Factors affecting Grade 3 student performance in Ontario: A multilevel analysis." *Education Quarterly Review*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 81-003, Vol. 7, no. 4, 2001.

An important measure of children's well-being is their academic performance. Previous research has shown that the socio-economic status of students and features of the home environment may have a large impact on academic achievement. Teaching practices, class size, parental involvement with the school and school neighbourhood characteristics may also exert incremental effects on academic performance.¹

This study identifies factors that influenced Ontario Grade 3 student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in 1996-97. An "ecological" approach is taken to examine these factors including characteristics of individual students and their families (student level); teachers and classrooms (class level); and schools and school neighbourhoods (school level).²

The face of Grade 3 in Ontario
In 1997, few Grade 3 Ontario students had a first language that was not English (5%) and few were enrolled in French immersion programs (4%), yet nearly one-quarter came from homes where a language other than English was spoken. More than half the students (54%) had home computers, but 70% of Grade 3 classes had limited or no access to computers in their school. About 59% had more than 100 books available to them at home. Grade 3 classes were frequently split-grade (47%) and were often taught by

teachers with no more than 10 years of teaching experience (63%). Most schools were public schools (69%) and were in urban areas (83%).

Based on this profile, a reference group was created to assess the impact on test scores of changes in student, class and school characteristics. The reference group embodies the most common characteristics of Grade 3 students: that is, it represents an English-speaking girl in a public school, with a reference score of 51 out of 100 who is not in a split-grade class and whose school is located in an urban neighbourhood with a median household income of \$42,500 (among other characteristics).³ The model developed for this study shows how test scores change when a student's characteristics deviate from that of the reference group. Thus, for example, being a boy would reduce the test score by 3 points to 48, compared with 51 for the reference group, even when all other characteristics remain the same.

Data in this article come from two sources. The 1996-97 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) database for Ontario provides data on province-wide standardized academic achievement tests. The EQAO data used in this study consist of student scores on 14 performance assessments in mathematics, writing and reading; information on four background questionnaires completed by students, parents/guardians, teachers and principals; and a student information form completed by teachers. These questionnaires provide information on student, family, teacher, class and school factors related to student performance.

The 1996 Census of Population collects data about the socio-economic status of residents in the school's neighbourhood (e.g. educational attainment) and whether the school is located in an urban or rural environment. In urban areas, school neighbourhoods are defined as the area within walking distance of the school, measuring a 1.6-kilometre radius. In rural areas, "neighbourhood" is defined as the census subdivision in which the school is located.¹

Target population and sample size

The target population consisted of all Grade 3 students enrolled in English-speaking schools in Ontario for 1996-97 (typically children about 8 years old). Excluded were those students who were

exempted from the test or whose records had missing information. The sample used for analysis represented nearly 116,000 Grade 3 students in over 6,900 classrooms in almost 3,300 schools. Tests were administered during April 1997 to assess the knowledge and skills that students had acquired in Grade 3 and earlier grades.

Achievement measure

The standardized test scores consisted of 14 performance assessments: 8 in mathematics, 3 in writing, and 3 in reading. The performance assessments were scaled using a logit transformation. The average achievement measure used in this analysis combines mathematics, writing and reading assessments into one score for each Grade 3 student.

The model

Student performance is thought to be influenced by numerous factors at different levels. Therefore, multilevel regression modeling was used to permit the simultaneous analysis of the influence of student, class and school characteristics on student achievement. The final model explains 21% of the variation in Grade 3 students' test scores, which falls into the typical range for this type of analysis.

¹ A census subdivision is a geographic area representing a municipality or its equivalent, such as Indian reserves or settlements, or unorganized territories.

Girls with computers and books at home do better

Students' sex, language and socio-economic background were all significantly associated with student achievement on the tests. For example, girls scored 3 points higher than boys. These results generally echo those of other researchers.⁴ Grade 3 students whose second language was English recorded performances 3 points lower than those whose mother tongue was English. If English was not the dominant language spoken at home, the students' performance was about 1 point lower than that of students from English-speaking homes.

French immersion programs had no effect on test results.

The socio-economic status of students' families were approximated by two proxy measures: the availability of more than 100 books and a computer at home. Students who had both of these resources scored an average of 6 points higher than those who had neither. This implies that socio-economic status plays a significant role in student achievement.

Past studies have suggested that parental involvement in children's education is associated with a wide range of positive outcomes for elementary school children, including higher

student achievement.⁵ Grade 3 students whose parents were not involved with the school scored 1 point less than the rest. Interpreting the meaning of the association between parental involvement and student achievement, however, is not straightforward. It may be that parental involvement is a marker for parental enthusiasm and positive parenting style.⁶

Experienced teachers and small classes are associated with higher test scores

After accounting for other variables influencing achievement, students scored 1 point higher when taught

by teachers who had more than 10 years of teaching experience in the lower elementary school grades or who were comfortable with the curriculum. Also, the more closely the teachers reported following the current curriculum, the better the students performed.

Smaller class size, proxied by the number of Grade 3 students in the class, can positively influence achievement.⁷ On average, 17.3 children were in each class, but class sizes were often much larger because nearly half of Grade 3 classes were split grades. By adding 8 more Grade 3 students to a class, students performed almost 1 point lower than students in classes of average size. Evidence about the relationship between class size and student performance in the United States has been mixed.⁸ Research suggests that even though teachers do not change their teaching strategies in smaller classrooms, students are more readily engaged in the learning process.⁹ While the size of a Grade 3 class was important in Ontario, having access to a computer in the classroom did not affect test outcomes. This mirrors results of a large U.S. study, which also found that computers in the classroom had no effect on student achievement at the Grade 4 level.¹⁰

Students at urban schools and higher income neighbourhoods achieved higher scores

The location of a school and the socio-economic profile of its neighbourhood were also linked to student achievement on the tests. Students from rural schools scored 2 points lower than those from urban schools. This contrasts starkly with U.S. research showing that elementary students in urban schools perform below their non-urban counterparts, even after accounting for the higher concentration of low-income students in urban U.S. schools.¹¹ As expected though, students attending schools located in neighbourhoods with

| Base test score for reference group | 51 |
|---|---------------------------|
| Student-level characteristics | Change in base test score |
| Sex (male) | -3 |
| English is the student's second language | -3 |
| French immersion | 0 |
| No computer at home | -3 |
| Less than 100 books at home | -3 |
| Language other than English spoken at home | -1 |
| Parents not actively or somewhat involved with school | -1 |
| Class-level characteristics | |
| Teacher characteristics | |
| More than 10 years teaching experience | 1 |
| Comfortable with curriculum | 1 |
| Teaching practice ¹ | 1 |
| Class environment | |
| Average number of grade 3 students in class ² | -1 |
| Limited access to computer in class | 0 |
| No access to computer in class | 0 |
| School-level characteristics | |
| School environment | |
| Small school – less than 230 students | 0 |
| Large school – more than 471 students | 0 |
| School neighbourhood | |
| Rural ³ | -2 |
| % of population with less than high school ⁴ | -1 |
| Less than 0.6% of population are recent immigrants ⁵ | -1 |
| More than 8.2% of population are recent immigrants ⁵ | 3 |
| Median income ⁶ | 1 |

1. Change in student achievement when teachers followed the curriculum more closely by one standard deviation.

2. Change in student achievement when eight more Grade 3 students are added.

3. Rural schools include those in towns, villages and other populated places with less than 1,000 population, and rural fringes of census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations that may contain estate lots and agricultural or undeveloped land with a population density of less than 400 people per square kilometre.

4. Change in student achievement when the percentage of the population with less than high school graduation increases by 13 points.

5. Recent immigrants are those who entered Canada between 1991 and 1996.

6. Change in student achievement when median school neighbourhood income is increased by \$10,000.

Sources: Education Quality and Accountability Office, 1996-97; and Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1996.

| | Sample size | % |
|---|-------------|-------|
| Student-level characteristics | 115,712 | |
| Sex (female) | | 50 |
| English is the student's second language | | 5 |
| French immersion | | 4 |
| Computer at home | | 54 |
| More than 100 books at home | | 59 |
| Language other than English spoken at home | | 24 |
| Home language not reported | | 2 |
| Parental involvement with school (actively or somewhat involved) | | 51 |
| Class-level characteristics | 6,929 | |
| Teacher characteristics | | |
| 10 years or less teaching experience | | 63 |
| Not comfortable with curriculum | | 25 |
| Teaching practice (score) ¹ | | 0† |
| Class environment | | |
| Average number of Grade 3 students in class | | 17† |
| Split-grade with Grade 2 | | 22 |
| Split-grade with Grade 4 | | 22 |
| Other split grade | | 3 |
| Limited access to computer in class | | 69 |
| No access to computer in class | | 2 |
| School-level characteristics | 3,285 | |
| School environment | | |
| Public | | 69 |
| Small school: less than 230 students | | 24 |
| Large school: more than 471 students | | 25 |
| School neighbourhood | | |
| Urban | | 83 |
| Population with less than high school graduation | | 31 |
| Less than 0.6% of population are recent immigrants ² | | 24 |
| More than 8.2% of population are recent immigrants ² | | 25 |
| Median age under 33 | | 23 |
| Median age over 37 | | 21 |
| Median income (\$ 000) | | 42.5† |

† Numbers are not percentages.

1. Teaching practice was a standardized measure of 68 items with mean 0 and standard deviation 1, representing how closely the teacher followed the suggested curriculum. The teaching practice scores ranged from -3.02 to 5.87.

2. Recent immigrants are those who entered Canada between 1991 and 1996.

Sources: Education Quality and Accountability Office, 1996-97 and Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1996.

affluent and well-educated populations outperformed those in less-advantaged neighbourhoods. A \$10,000 increase in the neighbourhood median household income is associated with a 1-point increase in student scores.

Also, after accounting for other characteristics, students living in a school neighbourhood with a high proportion of recent immigrants performed 3 points better than those who did not. Other studies have found that immigrant students perform as well as or better than native-born students.¹²

Student characteristics account for two-thirds of variation in test scores

The variation in students' achievements may be attributed to a number of factors, such as student characteristics (67% of the variation), classroom environment (20%), and school environment or neighbourhood (13%).¹³

While factors that students "bring to the classroom" (i.e. their natural academic ability, their motivation) can explain the bulk of student achievement, a surprisingly large amount of variation was attributable to types of classes and schools. Variation at these levels was similar to that found in American studies, yet the popular perception is that Canada probably has smaller differences in school environments than the United States.¹⁴

Summary

Girls, students with computers and books at home, and students whose first language was English outperformed their peers. Other important characteristics affecting test scores were not examined and may help to explain variations in test scores. These factors include students' past achievement, parents'/guardians' education levels, and students' use of cognitive resources in the home.

Tangible and intangible community resources can also have an effect.¹⁵ Students from urban schools, in school

neighbourhoods with high incomes and with many recent immigrants scored higher on the Grade 3 achievement tests after accounting for other factors in the model. The influences of schools and neighbourhoods on child performance are particularly important from a policy perspective because they are amenable to change through policy intervention.

Families and neighbourhoods can influence how well Grade 3 students perform in school. However, factors such as socio-economic status represent only one dimension of influence on achievement. General family functioning, parents' involvement with school-related issues, and strength of social ties among neighbourhood residents are not examined in this article and may be the subject of future research.

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No time to relax? How full-time workers spend the weekend

by Cynthia Silver and Susan Crompton

The weekend has long been considered sacred by many paid workers. It is supposed to be the golden time when most of us don't have to adhere to the company's schedule or answer our boss's demands. However, changes in the way we live — from more women working full-time to 24-hour just-in-time production schedules and the growth of self-employment — have changed many people's relationship to Saturday and Sunday. It often seems that the work week has invaded the weekend, since chores and errands that are no longer done between Monday and Friday get deferred to Saturday and Sunday. The data confirm this: on the weekend, Canadians who work full-time do a lot of unpaid work, and many do paid work as well.



Data in this article come from the 1998 General Social Survey (GSS) on time use. Respondents were asked to describe their activities in the previous 24 hours, accounting for every minute of the day. The survey collected data from nearly 11,000 respondents aged 15 and over living in private dwellings in the 10 provinces. The study population consists of Canadians aged 25 and over, representing almost 10 million full-time workers and almost 8.2 million adults who were not working for pay.

Five broad types of activities are analyzed here: leisure time, shopping, care for children and other household members, household work, and paid work. Patterns of time use by men and women are not compared because few differences exist. However, rates of participation in these activities do differ between the sexes; generally, men do more paid work and engage in more leisure activities, while women do more household chores and caregiving. (For further information, see "The time of our lives," *Canadian Social Trends* (Winter 2001)).

Not working for pay/not employed: the respondent has not done any paid work in the previous 7 days and reported their main activity in the past 12 months as being retired, keeping house, looking for work, being a student, or other (for example, long-term illness).

Full-time worker: the respondent worked full-time for pay in the previous 7 days.

This article explores what Canadian adults aged 25 and over who are employed full-time do over the course of an average day on the weekend, and provides some information about the differences in time use patterns on Saturday compared to Sunday. Weekend time use by adults who are not employed is also briefly discussed.

The morning: 6:00 a.m. to noon

The majority of the 10 million Canadian adults who work full-time sleep in

on the weekend. By 9:00 a.m., however, 80% are out of bed and their weekend is underway.¹ For many, the day starts with chores and, between 9:00 a.m. and noon, about one in five spends at least some time doing household work. The proportion of full-time workers engaged in child care and other caregiving is relatively stable throughout the morning. In any given 10-minute period from 7:00 a.m. to noon, between 2% and 3% are providing some care to a child or other household member.²

Leisure time: includes activities such as socializing, going to events, reading, being with friends and watching television.

Shopping: in addition to purchasing goods and window shopping, this activity includes arranging for or receiving other types of consumer services such as renting videos, getting a haircut, banking and taking things to be repaired.

Household/domestic work: includes such activities as housework, gardening and yard work, home and vehicle maintenance, repair and improvements, pet care, household management, and any related travel.

Child care and other caregiving: *child care* includes a wide variety of child-related activities such as watching a child's soccer practice, making Halloween costumes or helping with homework. It only captures "primary" activities, therefore time spent minding children while actively doing something else, such as cooking dinner or watching TV, are not reported as child care. *Other caregiving* includes activities such as driving another household member somewhere or visiting a household member in the hospital. Travel times are included since they are often an integral part of the care work.

Paid work: working for pay in a job or business, including time spent commuting to the workplace.

1. 86% are out of bed by 7:30 a.m. on an average weekday.

2. High sampling variability for all caregiving data. Readers should recall that this category captures only primary (direct) care activities. For information about the time that parents spend in the child's presence, as distinct from time dedicated explicitly to child care, see Cynthia Silver, "Being there: The time dual-earner couples spend with their children," *Canadian Social Trends*, Summer 2000.

Shopping begins in earnest at about 9:30 a.m., when most stores open, and peaks between 11:00 a.m. and noon, at 12% to 13%. By the end of the morning, almost 25% of full-time workers have spent at least some time acquiring goods and services.

Since much weekend activity involves the service industry — for example, retail stores and restaurants — it is not surprising that a high percentage of full-time workers are actually at work on the weekend. Nine percent are on the job at 7:00 a.m. At 10:00, 17% are at work, a rate which remains constant until noon. The rate drops moderately at that time, presumably as workers take their lunch break.

In the midst of all these tasks, some people do manage to snatch some leisure time on their weekend morning. The percentage of full-time workers engaged in recreation or relaxation activities rises steadily throughout the weekend morning: from 20% at 8:40 a.m. to just under 27% at noon.

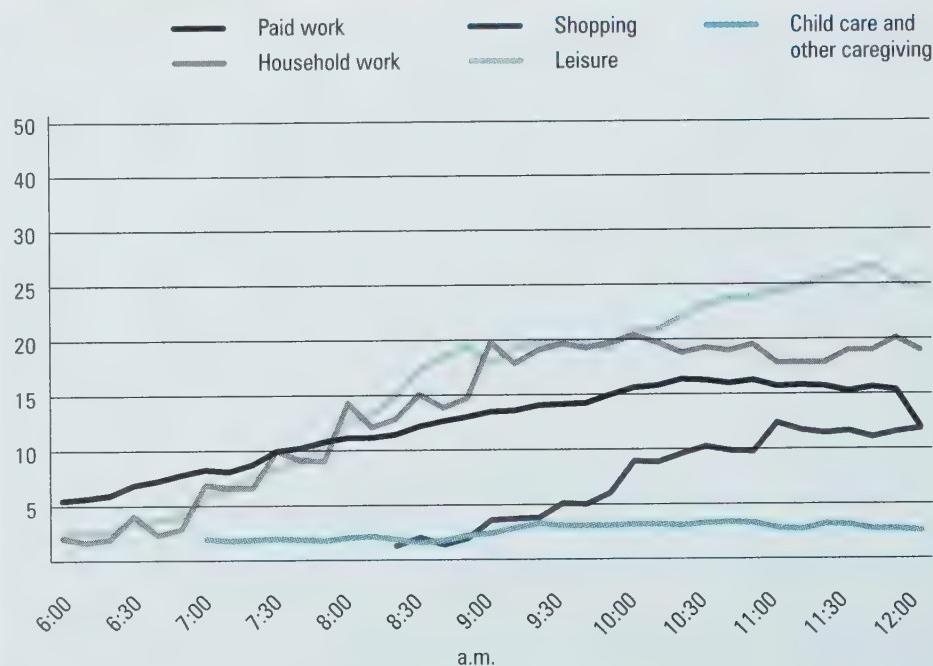
There are some differences in the time use patterns of full-time workers on Sunday as opposed to Saturday morning. Although the day starts at the same time — over three-quarters of them are out of bed by 9:00 a.m. — the pace seems slower as more people enjoy some leisure time. For example, at 9:20 a.m. on Sunday, 25% are doing things like reading the morning newspaper, compared with only 17% on Saturday. About an hour later, at 10:30 in the morning, the rates are 29% and 21% respectively.

Greater leisure on Sunday is due to fewer obligations. First, far fewer full-time workers are at their paid job on Sunday morning: between 11% and 12% at most, compared with 22% to 23% on Saturday. Second, shopping is not as important and the crowds don't arrive as early; on Saturday, 10% of full-time workers are shopping at

CST

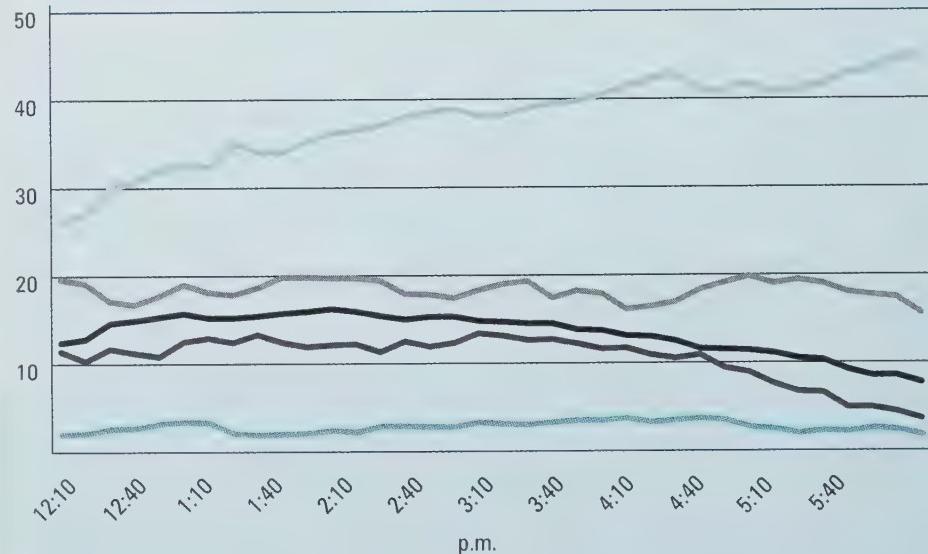
Full-time workers do housework and shopping in the morning on weekends...

% of full-time workers aged 25 and over



Note: Rates averaged over Saturday and Sunday. High sampling variability for the entire child care and other caregiving series. High sampling variability for household work, and for leisure until 6:50 a.m. and for shopping activities until 9:20 a.m. Break in series indicates sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

leaving the afternoon for leisure activities



Note: Rates averaged over Saturday and Sunday. High sampling variability for child care and other caregiving for the entire time series and for shopping activities from 5:50 p.m. Break in series indicates sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

9:50 a.m., but on Sunday, the 10% mark isn't reached until 11:00 a.m. (partly because of Sunday shopping regulations).³

On the other hand, a slightly higher proportion of people report doing household chores on Sunday morning.

The afternoon: 12:10 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Shopping and household work continue to make demands during the afternoon on an average weekend day. About 13% of full-time workers are out shopping in any given 10-minute period from noon until 4:00 p.m., at which point the proportion begins to decline. Overall, about 40% of full-time workers are out shopping at some time on a weekend afternoon. Housework, however, still occupies at least some of the afternoon for about

one in five people until just before suppertime at 6:00 p.m.

On the other hand, people who have to work on the weekend start to come home after 3:30 p.m.; the percentage at work falls from 15% at 3:30 p.m. to 8% at 6:00 p.m. And many more people are able to devote some time to leisure activities, with the proportion growing steadily from 27% just after noon to 45% at 6:00 p.m.

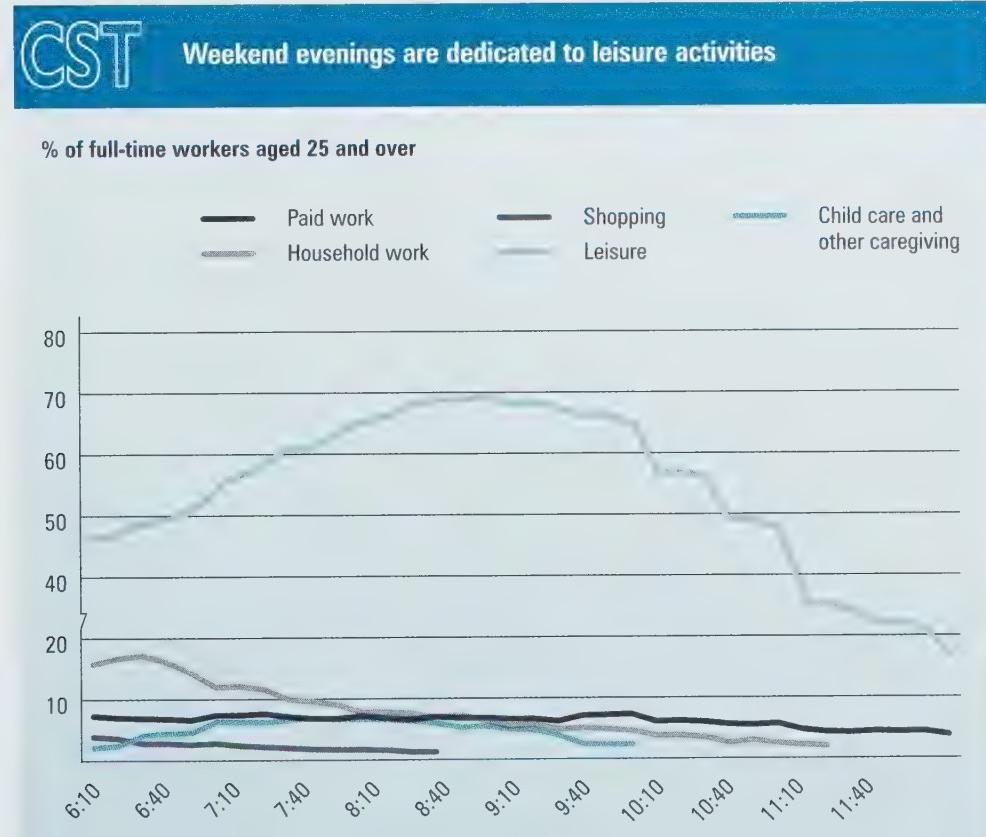
More full-time workers are able to devote time to recreation and relaxation on Sunday than Saturday afternoons. Far more of them report spending at least some of their afternoon on leisure pursuits on Sunday, especially in the early to mid-afternoon — the proportion rises from 42% at 1:20 p.m. to almost 50% at 4:00 p.m. In contrast, the proportion does not reach more than one in

three during the same time period on Saturday. Sunday doesn't attract the numbers of shoppers — a total of 36% of full-time workers go out to the stores, compared with 45% on Saturday afternoon. Nor does Sunday exhibit the peaks of shopping activity: the rate of shopping on Sunday is fairly flat all afternoon between noon and 4:00 p.m., while on a Saturday, traffic builds to a peak of 16% between 3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. before falling quickly.

The evening: 6:10 p.m. to midnight

People who work full-time continue to do some domestic work in their weekend evenings. At 7:30 p.m., 10% are engaged in housework, but afterwards the rate diminishes steadily. On the other hand, child care and other caregiving becomes more concentrated in the early evening than it is over the rest of the day. At any given time from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., between 6% and 7% of full-time workers are providing care, perhaps putting young children to bed or helping with homework. The rate of caregiving remains at 5% from 8:40 p.m. to just after 9:00 p.m. and then drops to virtually negligible levels.⁴ From 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., a total of 17% of full-time workers are providing child care and other caregiving to household members.

Throughout the course of the evening, an increasing proportion of full-time workers are having fun. At 6:50 p.m., over 50% are engaged in leisure activities; the rate rises rapidly over the next two hours and reaches a peak of 70% at 8:50 p.m. Beginning at 9:30 p.m., though, the leisure rate



Note: Rates averaged over Saturday and Sunday. High sampling variability for child care and other caregiving except from 7:00 p.m. to 8:50 p.m. High sampling variability for shopping activities from 6:10 p.m. and for household work from 9:20 p.m. Break in series indicates sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

3. Due to the increase in access to Sunday shopping since the 1998 survey, rates may now be higher than those presented here.
4. Data for child care and other caregiving have high sampling variability. Use with caution.

Morning

Half of the 8.2 million Canadians aged 25 and over who do not work for pay are up by 8:00 a.m. on a weekend morning. At 9:00 a.m., 26% are doing their household chores. They are more likely than full-time workers to do housework before noon. They are, however, also more likely to be enjoying some leisure time: at any given time between 9:40 a.m. and 11:50 a.m. on a weekend morning, over one-third are engaged in leisure activities.

The not-employed are no less likely to do housework on Sundays than Saturdays, but the pace of life on Sunday morning is a little slower. They do not sleep later but do take time to enjoy a leisurely morning. At any given time from 10:20 a.m. till almost noon, about 4 in 10 are engaged in recreation or relaxation activities.

Afternoon

Because adults who do not work for pay seem to prefer doing household tasks in the morning, far fewer are doing domestic chores in the afternoon, especially after 3:00 p.m. In the mid-afternoon between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., over 50% are engaged in leisure pursuits at any given time. The peak period for afternoon shopping — from 1:20 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. — is a little earlier than that for full-time workers. This may be due to attempts to avoid the weekend “shopping gridlock” generated by full-time workers.

drops as people start going to bed. At 11:00 p.m., over half (52%) of full-time workers report being asleep and three-quarters (75%) are sleeping by midnight.

Some people's leisure time, though, is other people's work time, especially if they are employed in the hospitality industry, protective services (e.g. hospitals, fire, police) or do shift work.

About 7% of full-time workers are doing paid work at any given time between 6:10 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Are Sunday nights different from Saturday nights? Not really. However, it takes a bit longer to get domestic chores out of the way on Sunday: at 7:00 p.m., 15% of people who work full-time are still doing household work, compared with only 9% on

Although the rate of household work on Sunday afternoon is no lower than on Saturday, people who are not employed have higher rates of leisure time on Sunday; the majority enjoy some leisure time on both afternoons, but the rates are 5 to 10 percentage points higher on Sunday than Saturday.

Evening

Once supper is cleared away, the proportion of not-employed who continue to do weekend housework² drops off. The rate reaches less than 8% at 7:30 p.m. and steadily falls until the end of the evening. Caregiving² becomes more demanding after supper, with about 5% of the not-employed engaged in caring for other household members at any given time between 7:10 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.² As expected, though, the majority give their evenings over to relaxation and recreation. At 6:00 p.m., over half are enjoying leisure time and activities, and the proportion rises quickly to peak at more than 80% at 8:50 p.m. They go to bed at almost the same time as full-time workers: at 11:00 p.m. on a weekend night, over half (58%) are asleep.

1. The not-employed aged 25 and over comprise a heterogeneous group of some 8.2 million people, and include people who are retired (41%), keeping house (24%), looking for work (5%), students (3%), people who were not working for other reasons (7%) and those who did not state their main activity (20%).

2. High sampling variability for these estimates. Use with caution.

Saturday at the same time. Also, proportionally fewer people report being engaged in leisure activities on a Sunday night, especially after 9:30 p.m., probably because they are going to bed earlier. The majority (61%) of full-time workers are asleep by 11:00 p.m. on Sunday; on Saturday, the majority (54%) do not get to bed until 11:30 p.m.

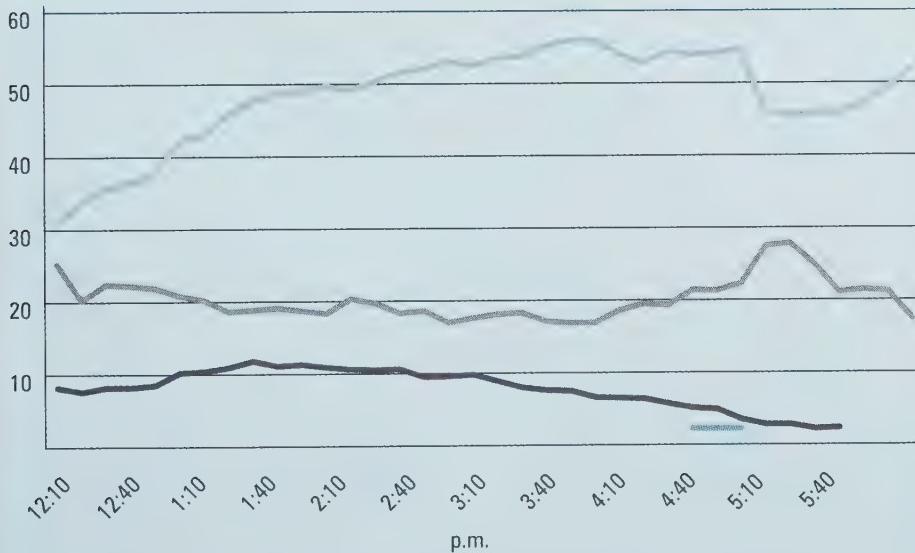
**Those not employed prefer to do housework in the morning
on weekends...**

% of the not-employed population aged 25 and over



Note: Rates averaged over Saturday and Sunday. High sampling variability for entire child care and other caregiving series, for leisure until 7:00 a.m. and for shopping activities until 10:50 a.m. Break in series indicates sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

... leaving their afternoons free for leisure activities



Note: Rates averaged over Saturday and Sunday. High sampling variability for entire child care and other caregiving series and for shopping activities from 3:30 p.m. Break in series indicates sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

Summary

Time use patterns show that the weekend offers less respite than full-time workers might like from the hurly-burly activity of Monday to Friday. But the less demanding Sundays suggest that, as the baby boomers begin to leave the work force, time use patterns of the general population may shift. Among other things, this change would probably affect store hours, traffic patterns and preferred times for leisure and social activities. Over the next few decades, it may be that Saturday and Sunday will begin to resemble the peaceful, relaxing weekend so many people today would like to have.



Cynthia Silver is a senior analyst with Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, and **Susan Crompton** is Editor-in-Chief of *Canadian Social Trends*.



Determinants of science and technology skills

Only a small proportion of elementary school students ultimately pursue a career in science and technology. Interest in mathematics and science declines between Grade 4 and Grade 8 and continues to drop during high school. Many students in senior secondary school stop taking mathematics and science when given the option. In 1995, only 42% of students were taking both these courses in their last year of high school. Most students find them "difficult" or "boring". Even when they have done well in mathematics and science in the past and believe that the subjects are important to them if they want to succeed in life, many students are unwilling to pursue them. Those who do continue with science plan to pursue studies in health sciences or engineering. At the university level, the science stream is quite stable. There is no evidence of a large-scale movement into or out of science programs (including agriculture and biological sciences, engineering and applied sciences, health professions, mathematics and physical sciences) between the bachelor's and master's levels or between the master's and doctoral levels. One exception is the large proportion of master's graduates in business who have undergraduate degrees in science. In general, though, university graduates in the sciences who go on to graduate studies stay in the sciences. Depending on the field of study, between 65% and 95% of the university graduates surveyed were working in jobs that were closely or somewhat related to their field of study. (The average for all graduates, including those from non-science fields, was 77%.) Graduates

in agricultural and biological sciences were the least likely (65%) to be in jobs related to their fields of study.

Education Quarterly Review

Catalogue no. 81-003-XIE
Vol. 8, no. 1



Alternative health care practitioners

Canadians continue to consult alternative health care practitioners to complement physician care. In 1998/99, an estimated 3.8 million people, about 17% of the population aged 18 or older, reported having sought the care of alternative health care practitioners in the previous year. Alternative practitioners include chiropractors, massage therapists, acupuncturists, homeopaths and naturopaths among others. Women were more likely than men to consult an alternative practitioner. About 2.2 million women aged 18 and older, or about 19% of the female population of this age, sought their services. The corresponding figures for men were 1.6 million or about 14% of the male population 18 years and over. The use of alternative health care also appears to be an age-related phenomenon. Almost one in five (19%) of 25- to 64-year-olds reported consulting an alternative practitioner, compared with about 11% for both the 18- to 24-year age group and seniors 65 or older. Consultation with alternative practitioners was particularly common among people with certain chronic conditions. Pain management may be a factor in the use of alternative practitioners.

Health reports

Catalogue no. 82-003-XIE
Vol. 13, no. 1



Crime comparisons between Canada and the United States

Over the past 20 years, Canada recorded much lower rates of violent crime than the United States did. However, rates for property offences have generally been higher in Canada, according to a comparison of police-reported crime between the two nations. Crime rates in both countries have followed similar trends during the past two decades. After peaking in 1991, rates for both violent and property crime generally declined throughout the 1990s. The homicide rate was three times higher in the United States than it was in Canada, while the American rate for aggravated assault was double the Canadian rate. For robbery, the rate was 65% higher in the United States. On the other hand, since 1990, Canada has recorded slightly higher rates of property crime, although the rates have gradually been converging during the late 1990s. Canada has higher reported rates than the United States for breaking and entering, motor vehicle theft and arson. Rates for both violent and property offences followed similar regional patterns in the two nations, rising from east to west.

Juristat

Catalogue no. 85-002-XIE
Vol. 21, no. 11



Family income

For the second consecutive year, average after-tax family income reached a new high in 1999 at \$51,473, up 1.9% from 1998. For unattached individuals, the average after-tax income was \$22,064, up 2.7% from the previous year. Couples with children under 18 earned an average after-tax income of \$57,665, also up 2.7%. Between 1998 and 1999, taxes for the average family decreased by 2.8%. The average family paid \$12,346 in income taxes in 1999. An estimated 723,000 families (9% of all families) were in a low income situation after tax in 1999, down from 737,000 in 1998. This was the lowest after-tax low-income rate since 1990 (8.5%). Among unattached individuals, 1.3 million had low income in 1999, virtually the same as in 1998. Market income for families became more polarized in the 1990s. In 1990, the top 20% of families received 42% of total market income. By 1999, their share rose to 44%. Market income shares of the other four quintiles dropped slightly over this period. The biggest losses were in the second and third quintiles, which each saw drops of almost one percentage point in their respective shares of market income.

Income in Canada, 1999

Catalogue no. 75-202-XPE

SOCIAL INDICATORS

| | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| LABOUR FORCE | | | | | | | | | |
| Labour force ('000) | 14,504.5 | 14,626.7 | 14,750.1 | 14,899.5 | 15,153.0 | 15,417.7 | 15,721.2 | 15,999.2 | 16,246.3 |
| Total employed ('000) | 12,857.5 | 13,111.7 | 13,356.9 | 13,462.6 | 13,774.4 | 14,140.4 | 14,531.2 | 14,909.7 | 15,076.8 |
| Men | 7,029.9 | 7,177.5 | 7,298.5 | 7,346.0 | 7,508.3 | 7,661.4 | 7,865.8 | 8,049.3 | 8,109.7 |
| Women | 5,827.5 | 5,934.2 | 6,058.4 | 6,116.6 | 6,266.2 | 6,479.0 | 6,665.3 | 6,860.4 | 6,967.1 |
| Workers employed part-time (%) | 19.3 | 19.0 | 18.9 | 19.2 | 19.1 | 18.9 | 18.5 | 18.1 | 18.1 |
| Men | 11.2 | 10.8 | 10.8 | 10.8 | 10.5 | 10.6 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 10.4 |
| Women | 29.0 | 28.9 | 28.6 | 29.2 | 29.4 | 28.8 | 28.0 | 27.3 | 27.1 |
| Involuntary part-time ¹ | 31.9 | 31.4 | 31.5 | 35.0 | 31.1 | 29.2 | 26.7 | 25.3 | 25.8 |
| Looked for full-time work | -- | -- | -- | -- | 10.6 | 10.0 | 9.0 | 7.4 | 7.5 |
| % of women employed whose youngest child is under 6 | 16.1 | 16.0 | 15.9 | 15.9 | 15.6 | 15.0 | 14.7 | 14.3 | 13.7 |
| % of workers who were self-employed | 15.8 | 15.5 | 15.7 | 16.1 | 17.1 | 17.2 | 16.9 | 16.2 | 15.3 |
| % of employed working over 40 hours per week ² | 21.0 | 21.7 | 21.7 | 21.2 | 18.9 | 18.9 | 18.4 | 18.0 | 17.5 |
| % of workers employed in temporary/contract positions | -- | -- | -- | -- | 9.4 | 9.8 | 10.0 | 10.5 | 10.9 |
| % of full-time students employed in summer | 49.9 | 50.3 | 50.2 | 47.9 | 45.7 | 47.2 | 48.8 | 50.9 | 51.3 |
| Unemployment rate (%) | 11.4 | 10.4 | 9.4 | 9.6 | 9.1 | 8.3 | 7.6 | 6.8 | 7.2 |
| Men aged 15-24 | 19.6 | 17.9 | 16.3 | 16.9 | 17.1 | 16.6 | 15.3 | 13.9 | 14.5 |
| 25-54 | 10.6 | 9.6 | 8.7 | 8.9 | 8.0 | 7.2 | 6.5 | 5.7 | 6.3 |
| Women aged 15-24 | 14.3 | 13.5 | 13.0 | 13.7 | 15.2 | 13.6 | 12.6 | 11.3 | 11.0 |
| 25-54 | 9.9 | 9.0 | 8.2 | 8.5 | 7.6 | 6.9 | 6.3 | 5.8 | 6.0 |
| Population with high school or less | 14.2 | 13.1 | 12.2 | 12.4 | 12.1 | 11.2 | 10.3 | 9.3 | 9.6 |
| Population with postsecondary completion | 9.6 | 8.9 | 7.9 | 8.1 | 7.4 | 6.5 | 5.9 | 5.2 | 5.8 |
| Population with university degree | 5.9 | 5.4 | 4.9 | 5.2 | 4.8 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 3.9 | 4.6 |
| EDUCATION | | | | | | | | | |
| Total enrolment in elementary/secondary schools ('000) | 5,327.8 | 5,362.8 | 5,430.8 | 5,414.5 | 5,386.3 | 5,369.7 | -- | -- | -- |
| Secondary school graduation rate (%) | 74.6 | 71.5 | 76.4 | 76.4 | 76.3 | 75.9 | 76.7 | -- | -- |
| Postsecondary enrolment ('000) | | | | | | | | | |
| Community college, full-time | 369.1 | 379.9 | 391.2 | 397.3 | 398.6 | 403.5 | -- | -- | -- |
| Community college, part-time | 98.4 | 90.8 | 87.7 | 87.1 | 91.6 | 91.4 | -- | -- | -- |
| University, full-time ³ | 574.3 | 575.7 | 573.2 | 573.2 | 573.1 | 580.3 | -- | -- | -- |
| University, part-time ³ | 300.3 | 283.3 | 273.2 | 256.1 | 249.7 | 246.0 | -- | -- | -- |
| % of population 18-24 enrolled full-time in postsecondary | 33.4 | 33.9 | 34.3 | 34.6 | 34.3 | 34.4 | -- | -- | -- |
| % of population 18-21 in college | 23.5 | 24.2 | 24.7 | 24.7 | 24.6 | 24.7 | -- | -- | -- |
| % of population 18-24 in university ³ | 20.3 | 20.4 | 20.4 | 20.4 | 20.2 | 20.3 | -- | -- | -- |
| Community college diplomas granted ('000) | 95.2 | 99.0 | 97.2 | 101.0 | 105.0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Bachelor's and first professional degrees granted ⁴ ('000) | 126.5 | 127.3 | 128.0 | 125.8 | 124.8 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Agriculture, biological sciences | 8,121 | 8,399 | 9,288 | 9,664 | 10,079 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Education | 21,123 | 21,277 | 21,421 | 20,638 | 19,374 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Engineering and applied sciences | 8,799 | 9,098 | 9,415 | 9,138 | 9,255 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Fine and applied arts | 4,189 | 4,194 | 4,142 | 4,105 | 4,276 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Health professions | 7,970 | 8,375 | 8,633 | 8,837 | 8,620 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Humanities and related | 16,643 | 16,127 | 15,889 | 15,014 | 14,721 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Mathematics and physical sciences | 6,816 | 7,142 | 7,005 | 7,091 | 7,239 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Social sciences | 49,172 | 49,035 | 48,422 | 47,751 | 47,760 | -- | -- | -- | -- |

-- Data not available.

1. 1996 is an eight-month average (January to August). Data after 1996 are not comparable with previous years.

2. Hours usually worked in their main job by workers aged 25 and over.

3. Includes undergraduate and graduate studies.

4. Includes those whose field of study was not reported.

Sources: Statistics Canada *Labour Force Historical Review*, 2001, Catalogue no. 71F0004XCB and *Education In Canada*, 2000, Catalogue no. 81-229-XPB.

LESSON PLAN

Suggestions for using Canadian Social Trends *in the classroom*

Lesson plan for "Ontario Grade 3 student achievement"

Objectives

- To become more aware of the factors that influence student achievement.
- To discuss the most effective ways of improving learning.

Methods

1. Survey the class to find out how many students have taken provincial, national or international achievement tests to assess their skills in reading, writing, mathematics or science. Discuss why these tests are done and what is achieved by them.
2. Discuss why some students do better on achievement tests than others. What factors contribute to the differences?
3. Why is it important to assess reading, writing and mathematics skills of students at a young age such as in Grade 3?
4. Discuss how teachers and families could use these assessment results to possibly help improve young students' skills.
5. In April and May 2000, the Program for International Student Assessment measured the reading, mathematics and science literacy of 15-year-olds in 32 OECD countries. Overall, Canadian students performed well, ranking second in reading, sixth in mathematics and fifth in science among 32 countries. Canada is part of a cluster of countries that scored near the top in all areas. Only Finland performed significantly better than Canada in reading, only Korea and Japan scored significantly higher in mathematics and only Korea, Japan and Finland performed significantly better in science. Discuss if Canada should strive to score the highest in the world. How can this be achieved? Do achievement tests play a role in reaching this objective?

Using other resources

- *Measuring student knowledge and skills: The performance of Canada's youth in reading, mathematics and science.*
<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/011204/d011204a.htm>.

For other lesson plans for Social Studies courses, check out the Statistics Canada Web site, <http://www.statcan.ca>, under Learning Resources. Select Teaching resources, then Lesson plans. There are more than 180 lessons available, listed by level and subject. E-STAT, our interactive research tool and database, is now free to Canadian educational institutions at <http://estat.statcan.ca>. To receive our bimonthly electronic "Learning Resources Bulletin" please send an email to listproc@statcan.ca, leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message type: subscribe statcanedu, followed by your first and last name.

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Educators

You may photocopy this "Lesson plan" or any item or article in *Canadian Social Trends* for use in your classroom.

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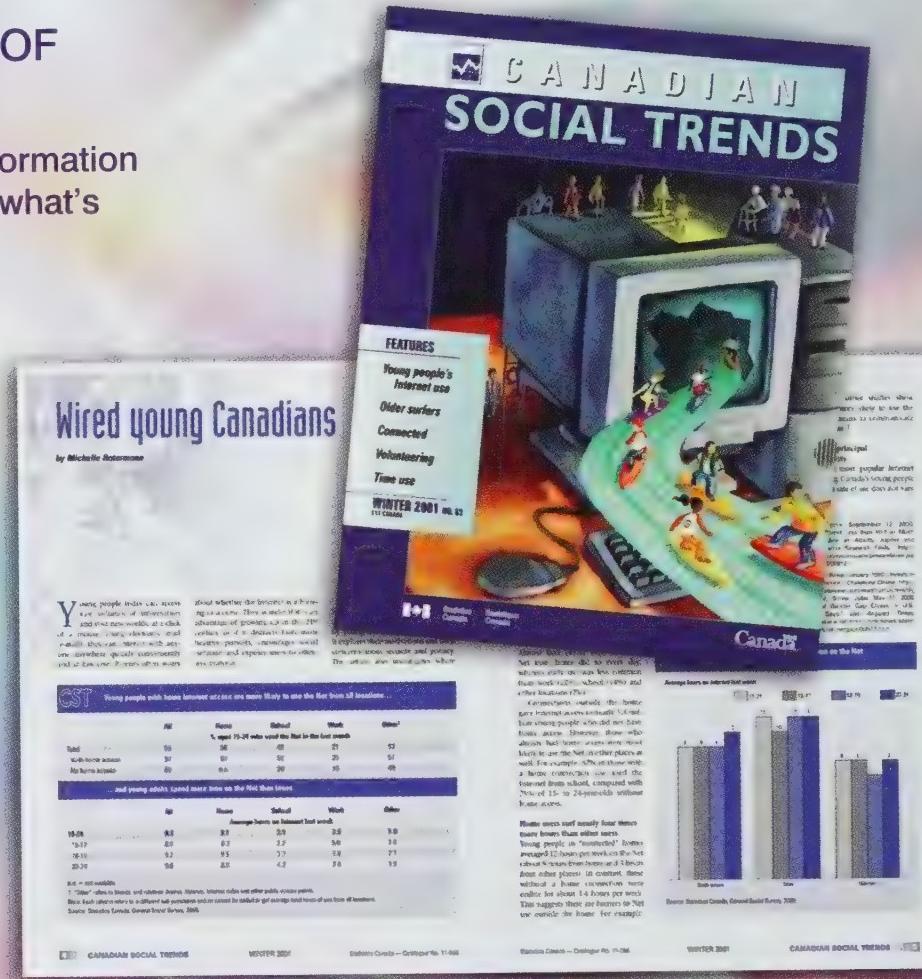
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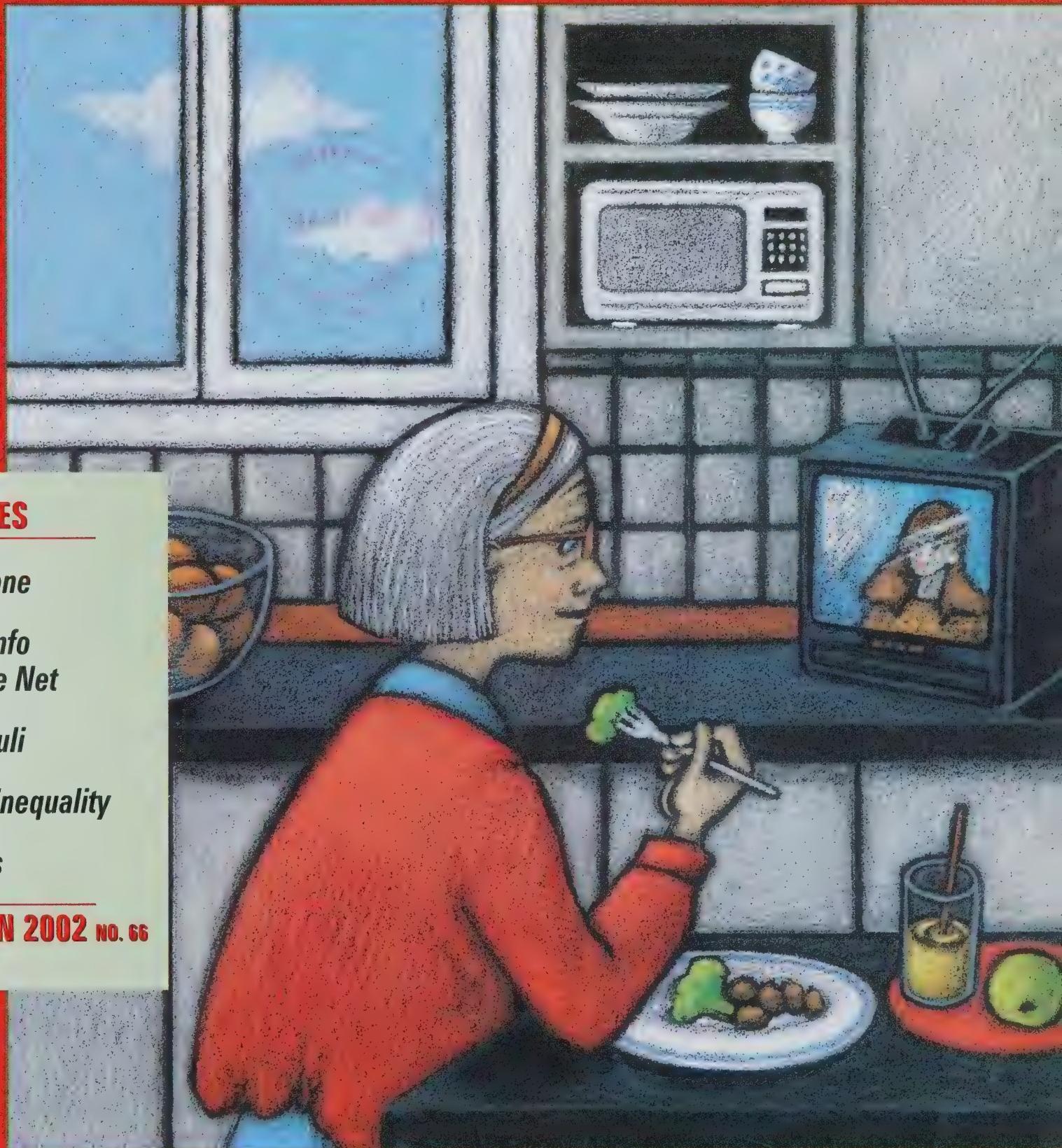


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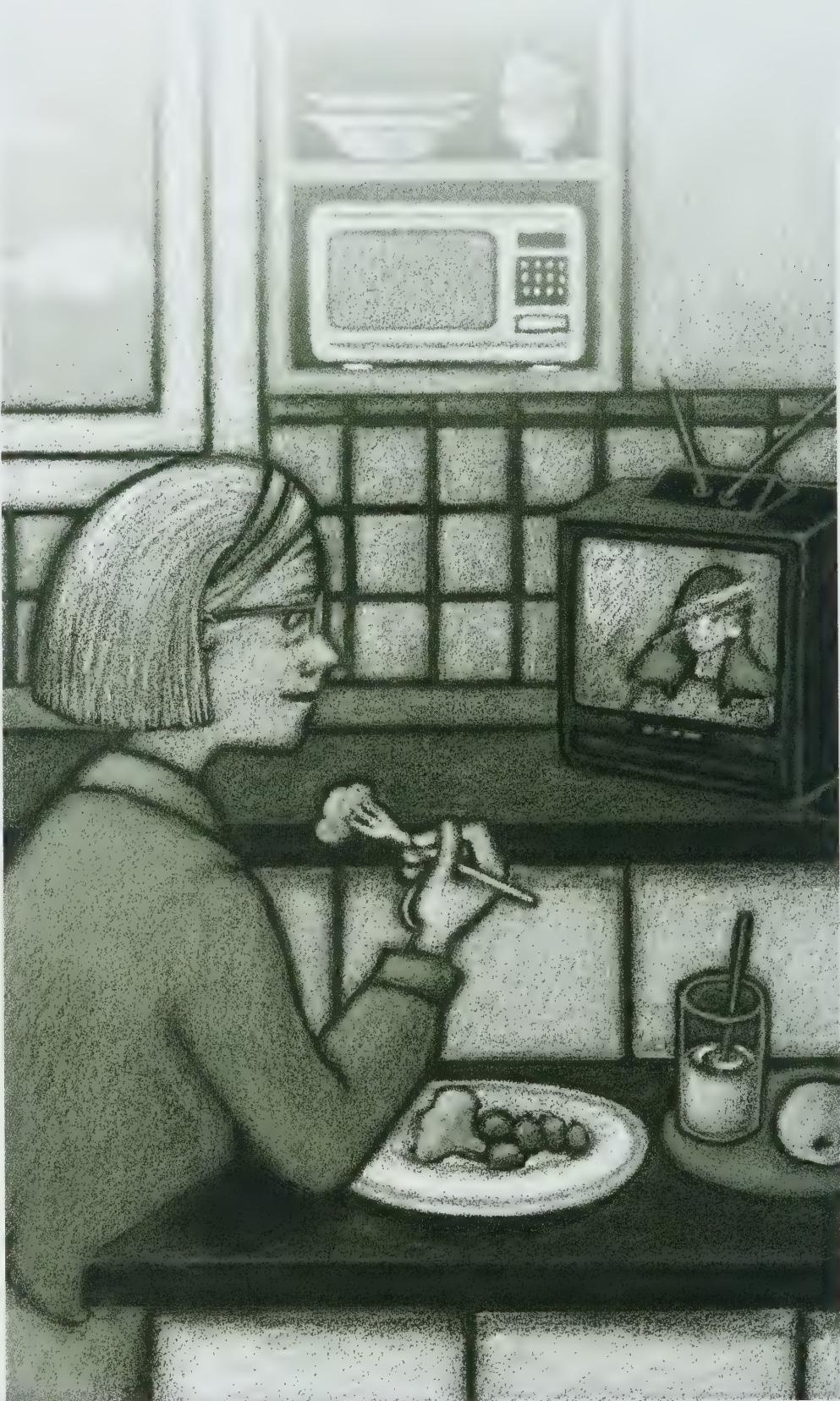
Born in Poland, **Malgosia Chelkowska** studied at the Department of Graphic Arts of the Fine Arts Academy in Kraków and has worked as an illustrator for several publishers in Poland. A Canadian resident since 1983, she currently lives in Ottawa, Ontario, where she continues to work as an illustrator and graphic designer. She is a member of the Association des Illustrateurs et Illustratrices du Québec. Her fields of interest include design, painting and three-dimensional works.

Time alone

by Warren Clark

Portable phones, pagers and data transmission devices of every sort keep us terminally in touch wherever we are. At the same time, many people frequently feel lonely. Loneliness has been linked to depression, anxiety, interpersonal hostility and an increased vulnerability to health problems.¹ Surveys asking what's most important in life routinely find relationships at the top of the list. Connections with other people sustain us, enrich us, and allow us to know who we are. Studies show they can make us healthier, happier and more successful at our jobs.² They make life worth living. Yet, many people live alone and spend much of their time alone.

Using data from the Census of Population, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the General Social Survey (GSS), this article examines the groups of Canadians most likely to live alone, the amount of time spent alone on an average day, attitudes to spending time alone and the influence that time alone has on overall happiness.



1. Rokach, A. 2000. "Perceived causes of loneliness in adulthood." *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 15, 1: 67-84.

2. Pappano, L. 2001. *The Connection Gap — Why Americans Feel So Alone*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press. p. 130.

Data on time spent alone come from the 1986, 1992 and 1998 General Social Surveys (GSS) on the time use of Canadians. Respondents were asked to indicate who was with them during each activity on the reference day. Those who said they were alone were recorded as spending time alone for the duration of that activity.

The 1986 GSS interviewed people between November 22 and December 22, whereas the 1998 survey was conducted throughout the year. However, selected interviews for 1998 show little difference in the time people spent alone during the pre-Christmas period and the rest of the year (6.0 hours versus 5.9 hours). This suggests that seasonality is not an important source of variation in time spent alone and that the increase between 1986 and 1998 is real.

Data on living alone are taken from the Census of Population and the 2001 Labour Force Survey. The concept of living alone refers to being the sole occupant of a private dwelling. Persons living alone are therefore not necessarily alone in the sense of being socially isolated. Excluded are those who live in collective dwellings such as hotels, hospitals, residences, institutions, camps, jails and rooming houses, representing about 1.6% of the population in 1996.

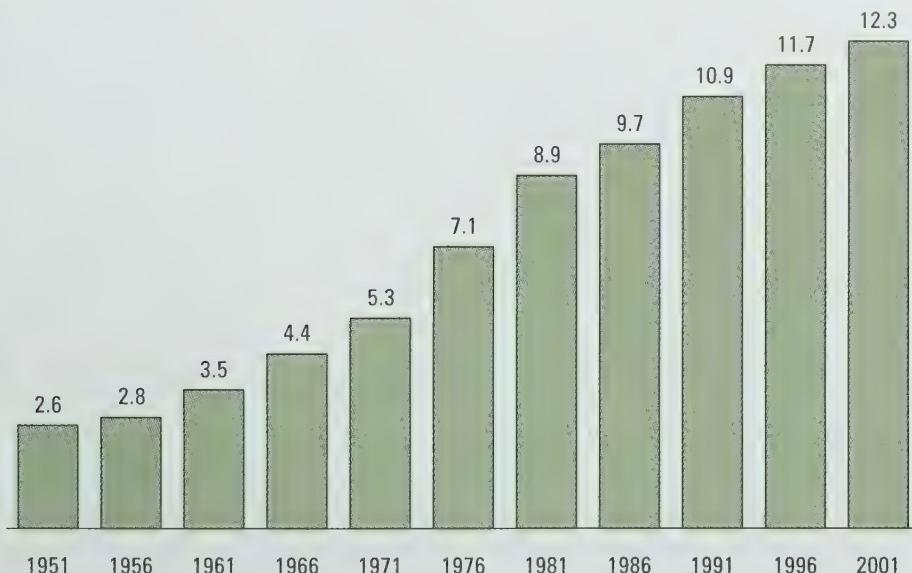
Living alone has soared over the past 50 years

Although we want to be connected to those around us, our lives seem to be headed in the opposite direction. Over the last 50 years, living alone has become much more common: the proportion of Canadians aged 15 and over who lived alone nearly quintupled from 2.6% in 1951 to 12.3% in 2001.³

Many reasons may account for the rise in this living arrangement. The decline of extended families has seen more unattached grandparents, aunts and uncles — who previously would have stayed with relatives — living on their own, while falling fertility rates and fewer children living close by have left many widowed seniors alone.⁴ Other equally important factors include the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans of 1966, which reduced economic hardship among seniors; health care programs that increasingly provide care in people's homes; and household conveniences, including microwaves, dishwashers, frost-free refrigerators, freezers and boxed meals, which all make living alone easier to accomplish.⁵ As for the

Living alone has become more common in the last 50 years

% of population aged 15 and over living alone



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1951–1996, and Labour Force Survey, 2001.

3. About 12% of Great Britain's population lived alone in 2001 and 10% of the United States' in 2000. Matheson, J. and P. Babb (ed.). 2002. *Social Trends* 32. London, England: National Statistics. p. 41; and U.S. Census Bureau. 2002. *Quick Tables*. [http://factfinder.census.gov, DP-1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics — 2000; Data set; Census 2000 Summary File 1 \(SF 1\); 100-Percent Data; Geographic Area: United States \(Accessed on 15 February 2002\).](http://factfinder.census.gov, DP-1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics — 2000; Data set; Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1); 100-Percent Data; Geographic Area: United States (Accessed on 15 February 2002).)

4. Macunovich, D.J., R.A. Eaterlin, C.M. Schaeffer and E.M. Crimmins. February 1995. "Echoes of the baby boom and bust: Recent and prospective changes in living alone among elderly widows in the United States." *Demography* 32, 1: 18.

5. Miron, J.R. 1980. *The Rise of the One-Person Household: The Ontario Experience, 1951 to 1976*. University of Toronto, Centre for Urban and Community Studies. Research paper no. 116, p. 1-2.

young, changing societal circumstances such as delayed marriage, high divorce rates and greater economic independence for women have made the option of staying alone more likely.⁶

Not only are more Canadians living alone, but they do so at a younger age. According to the 1995 GSS, adults who in 1995 were between the ages of 25 and 34 were much more likely to have lived alone at ages 15 to 24 than their senior (ages 65 and over) counterparts: 36% versus 6%. Nearly one-quarter of seniors (23%) reported first being on their own at age 55 or older, probably due to widowhood in many cases, and almost half (47%) had never lived alone. While coping with the loss of a spouse is stressful at any age, learning to live alone later in life, when change is more difficult to adapt to, can be even more trying.

Smaller households, larger homes

Many homes today are designed to provide people with spaces where they may do many things simultaneously. In the kitchen/family room, one person may be preparing a meal and speaking on the phone, while another watches TV and exercises, or checks e-mail while snacking, doing homework and listening to music on headphones. The old living room, with its essentially single purpose of sitting and talking has, in effect, been replaced with a room that encourages household members not to gather around the fire on a winter evening but to be privately engaged in separate tasks.⁷

Homes with more places to be alone and uninterrupted by other

family members are often in great demand. Between 1951 and 1996, while the size of the average household shrunk from 4.0 to 2.6 people, the size

of homes increased from 5.3 to 6.1 rooms. As a result, even individuals who live with others spend more time by themselves. Not too many years

CST Nearly 4 in 10 senior women live alone

| Age | Both sexes | Both sexes | Men | Women |
|-------------|-------------------|---|------------|--------------|
| | '000 | % of population living alone in private households | | |
| 15 and over | 3,030 | 12 | 12 | 13 |
| 15–24 | 140 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| 25–44 | 980 | 10 | 14 | 7 |
| 45–54 | 450 | 10 | 11 | 9 |
| 55–64 | 400 | 14 | 11 | 16 |
| 65 and over | 1,060 | 29 | 17 | 38 |

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2001.

CST Time alone has increased most for men aged 45 to 64

| Age | 1986 | 1992 | 1998 | Change between 1986 and 1998 |
|-------------------|--|-------------|-------------|---|
| | Number of hours spent alone on an average day | | | Hours |
| Both sexes | | | | |
| 15 and over | 4.4 | 5.3 | 5.9 | 1.5 |
| 15–24 | 3.6 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 1.1 |
| 25–44 | 3.9 | 4.7 | 5.5 | 1.6 |
| 45–64 | 4.8 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 1.7 |
| 65–74 | 5.8 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 1.1 |
| 75 and over | 6.8 | 7.8 | 8.0 | 1.2 |
| Men | | | | |
| 15 and over | 4.1 | 5.4 | 6.0 | 1.9 |
| 15–24 | 3.9 | 4.7 | 4.9 | 1.0 |
| 25–44 | 3.9 | 4.9 | 5.8 | 1.9 |
| 45–64 | 4.3 | 6.0 | 6.6 | 2.3 |
| 65 and over | 5.1 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 1.4 |
| Women | | | | |
| 15 and over | 4.6 | 5.3 | 5.8 | 1.2 |
| 15–24 | 3.3 | 4.1 | 4.4 | 1.1 |
| 25–44 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 5.1 | 1.1 |
| 45–64 | 5.3 | 6.0 | 6.4 | 1.1 |
| 65 and over | 6.9 | 7.6 | 8.0 | 1.1 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

6. Teachman, J.D., L.M. Tedrow and K. Crowder. November 2000. "The changing demography of America's families." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62: 1243.

7. Pappano, L. 2001. op.cit. p. 109-110.



ago, for example, a small space tucked between bedrooms was the only bathroom for a household. Today, even the most modest new homes have two and sometimes three washrooms to preserve the privacy of fewer household members. Bedrooms, which in the past were often shared by siblings, are now often occupied by one child only, ensuring further privacy.

Independent living rises most among the oldest

When picturing people living alone, widows and widowers often come to mind. In 2001, they were the largest group of people living on their own — about one million seniors, mostly widows. The rise in living alone reflects in part the aging of the population, as more people find themselves on their own after the death of a partner. At the same time, with the introduction of the Canada Pension Plan in 1966, fewer widowed people suffer economic hardship, facilitating an independent life.

In 1971, 39% of widowed people aged 65 and over lived alone; by 2001, this figure had increased to 72%.⁸ Although widowed men and women of all ages are more likely to live alone than in the past, independent living increased the most among those over age 85.

However, seniors are not the only Canadians to report growing rates of living on their own. Individuals aged 25 to 44 are also increasingly more likely to experience this living arrangement (just under one million of them in 2001), with men this age nearly twice as likely as women to do so: 14% versus 7%, respectively.

Canadians spend nearly six hours a day alone

According to the GSS, on an average day in 1998, Canadians aged 15 and over spent 5.9 hours alone compared with 4.4 hours in 1986 (excluding personal care activities such as sleep and



Young working adults and parents aged 25 to 44 with children
spend the least time alone

| Age | Both sexes | Men | Women |
|------------------------------------|--|------|-------|
| | Number of hours spent alone on an average day | | |
| 15 and over | 5.9 | 6.0 | 5.8 |
| 15–24 | | | |
| Students | 4.9 | 5.0 | 4.9 |
| Employed | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.2 |
| 25–44 | | | |
| Single | 7.0 | 7.6 | 5.9 |
| Married/common-law, no children | 5.5 | 5.5 | 5.5 |
| Married/common-law, children | 4.8 | 5.0 | 4.6 |
| 45–64 | | | |
| Single | 9.0 | 9.6 | 8.2 |
| Married/common-law, no children | 6.0 | 6.1 | 5.9 |
| Married/common-law, children | 5.9 | 6.0 | 5.7 |
| 65 and over | | | |
| Married | 5.2 | 5.3 | 5.1 |
| Widowed | 10.3 | 10.5 | 10.2 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

personal hygiene). Time spent alone grew in nearly every group, but particularly among men aged 45 to 64, who reported an increase of over 2 hours between 1986 and 1998.⁹ In contrast, women's time on their own climbed by approximately 1.2 hours, regardless of age.

Interestingly, people spent more time alone during both paid and unpaid work as well as leisure activities. The advent of personal entertainment devices and home computers likely contributed to more leisure time alone. Despite households getting smaller, the number of televisions has been climbing, thereby facilitating solitary viewing; while in 1990, 54% of households had more than one black and white or colour televisions, by 2000 58% reported having at least two colour televisions.

Dinner-table discussions — times when families exchange news, make plans and converse — may be one of the casualties of the rising trend in aloneness. Even people who live with others are eating more meals alone. On an average day in 1998, 50% of adults living with others ate at least one meal alone compared with 36% in 1986. Among those who live on their own, half ate all their meals alone (approximately the same proportion as in 1986), while 11% ate all their meals with someone else (down from 15% in 1986). Younger individuals

8. Statistics Canada. 1971 Census of Population and 2001 Labour Force Survey.

9. In particular, men aged 45 to 64 spent 2.2 hours alone doing paid work in 1998, compared with 1.2 hours in 1986.

who lived alone were much less likely than older ones to eat all of their meals alone: 29% of 25- to 34-year-olds compared with 65% of seniors.

Women with young children have the least time alone

Nearly everyone spends some time during the day alone, even if it's only for a few minutes while driving to work after dropping off the kids at school.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, older people spend much more time by themselves than younger ones. In 1998, Canadians aged 75 or over spent 8.0 hours alone on an average day compared with 4.7 hours reported by 15- to 24-year-olds. Women under 65 years spend less time by themselves than men that age, possibly because they tend to be more involved in caring for their families and participating in social activities. Even on the job, however, women spend less time working alone than men: 30% of their paid work time versus 40% reported by men. This difference may reflect the fact that women are more concentrated in health care and teaching professions as well as sales and services occupations, which involve a lot of social interaction.

Children, especially young children, require a lot of attention. It is no surprise, then, that parents aged 25 to 44 spend less time alone on an average day (4.8 hours) than others. As children grow older and the need to spend time with them declines, parents' time alone rises to about the same level as that of people without children. Parents aged 45 to 64, who tend to have older children, spend 5.9 hours alone compared with 6.0 hours for people the same age without children. Mothers with children all under age 5 spent the least time alone — 3.6 hours on an average day — compared with 5.1 hours for mothers with children aged 5 to 12, and 5.7 hours for mothers with teenagers.

25% of Canadians would like more time alone

When the 1998 GSS asked Canadians if they wanted to spend more time alone, about one in four answered "yes." Not surprisingly, women aged 25 to 44 with children under 5 years were most likely to express this wish, 58%, compared with 34% of men in the same circumstances. When the children were older and required less care, mothers in this age group reported less need for more time alone. Because most seniors already spend a lot of time by themselves, few expressed a wish for more time alone (7%). And naturally, being time-stressed makes a difference. Among those who were highly time-stressed, 60% wanted more time alone compared with 31% of those with moderate levels of time stress and 8% with low levels.¹¹

Time alone influences happiness

According to the 1998 GSS, people who spent a lot of time by themselves were less likely to be very happy with their lives than those who spent little time alone. For example, 48% of those who spent less than 2 hours alone on an average day were very happy compared with 37% who spent 8 or more hours by themselves. This difference was greatest among seniors and almost non-existent among those aged 45 to 64.

Because people who live alone usually spend the most time alone, it is not surprising that they are less likely to be very happy than people who live with a spouse and children, or just a spouse. Lone parents aged 15 to 24 were the only group of people living with others who were less likely to be very happy than individuals this age living on their own. Overall, about 30% of people living alone felt very happy, compared with 44% of those with a spouse and children, and 48% with only a spouse. Part of the difference in happiness may be linked

to income (and people living alone generally have less income than those living with a partner), as people with higher incomes are more likely to say they are very happy.

Summary

A combination of factors has resulted in more Canadians living on their own than ever before. In addition, we are spending more time alone even if we live with others. Women with young children spend the least time by themselves and are most likely to wish they had more time on their own. In contrast, many seniors are by themselves a lot and as a result very few wish to spend more time alone. Time alone seems to influence our level of happiness — those who spend a lot of time alone are less likely to be very happy than those who spend very little time by themselves.

10. In 1998, 10% of the population aged 15 or over spent less than 1 hour alone on an average day while 19% spent more than 10 hours on their own.

11. Respondents were asked 10 questions to measure their perception of time stress. Answering "yes" to 7 or more questions classified someone as highly time stressed, "yes" to 4 to 6 questions as moderately time stressed and to 3 or fewer questions as having low levels of time stress. In 1998, 17% of the population aged 15 and over had high, while 30% had moderate levels of time stress.



Warren Clark is a senior analyst with Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

Health information on the Net

by Kathryn Stevenson

The office was busy and you didn't catch everything the doctor was saying. On the way home, you remembered all the questions you forgot to ask, and wondered what else there was to know about this condition. With no medical reference text on the bookshelf, you turn to the Internet — the latest tool for the health care consumer. You type the name of the illness into the search engine and within minutes you have an almost overwhelming volume of information from a variety of web sites.

Some Canadians turn to the Internet to find out more about a specific disease, while others use it to self-diagnose or to look for the latest diet regime. While, traditionally, people have used libraries and medical books to enhance their knowledge of health and medicine, the advent of the Internet presents a new means of acquiring information. And the more popular the Net becomes, the more likely people will be to use it as a search vehicle for the latest details on a variety of topics, including medical conditions, alternative treatments and experimental cures.

CST

What you should know about this study

Data in this article come from the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) on access to and use of information communication technology and the Household Internet Use Survey (HIUS) from 1997 to 2000. The 2000 GSS collected detailed information about individuals' use of technology. Over 25,000 respondents aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces were interviewed. The survey asked questions about using the Internet for health information, types of information sought, web sites visited, and overall satisfaction with the information. The HIUS, first conducted in 1997 to measure the adoption of Internet services by Canadian households, collected data from approximately 34,000 private households in the 10 provinces. A question was included on using the Internet to search for medical or health information.

Along with a wealth of other subjects, health and medical information is readily available on the Internet. Who is most likely to search the Net for health-related topics? What sorts of health information are Canadians looking for and where exactly are they looking? And is the information they find credible?¹ Using data from the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) and the Household Internet Use Survey (HIUS) for the 1997 to 2000 period, this article explores some of these questions.

Nearly half of Net users have searched for health-related information

Health and medical information was the third most popular topic people searched for in 2000, following window shopping (information on

products and services) and news. Six million Canadians, or 46% of Internet users aged 15 and over, searched the Net for health or medical information; 3.4 million individuals had searched at least once a month in the previous year. Over time, use of the Net for health topics grew dramatically: between 1998 and 2000, the number of households looking for health-related information on the Internet increased by over 146% to 2.7 million. The growth of this group now

1. World Health Organization. 1999. *Medical Products and the Internet: A Guide to Finding Reliable Information*. www.who.int/medicines/library/qsm/who-edm-qsm-99-4/medicines-on-internet-guide.html (Accessed May 6, 2002.) Geneva; "The web of information inequality." *The Lancet*. 1997. 349: 9068.

outpaces by far the overall growth in the number of Internet users (83%).²

Most people surfing the Internet for health-related topics are regular Net users.³ Among those who searched online for health information, more than 60% used the Internet at least once a month, while 8% did so at least weekly. Women were more likely to look for health topics than men: 52% compared with 41%. This is not surprising given that women generally use health care services more often than men; women also tend to be more interested in health issues.⁴ Searching for this type of information was common to Canadians of all ages, with the exception of young adults. Men in the 15- to 24-year age group were the least likely to try to find answers to health and medical questions; just over one-quarter had done so in the previous year.

Households with children are far more likely to search the Net for health information than other types of households. Among those households searching online for health-related topics, 18% had a child or children under age 5, 26% had children between 6 and 12 years and 22% had teenagers. The remaining one-third was divided among singles, couples without children and multi-family households without children.

Health care workers most likely to search the Net for health information

Health care workers⁵ have a higher than average rate of Internet use: 59% of health care workers use the Net compared with 53% of all paid workers. Not surprisingly, they are also more likely to search for health-related information; in fact, about 7 in 10 of Internet users employed in the health care sector had done so.

As health care workers take to the Net, elements of Canada's health care system are also moving online. Governments at all levels have invested in

more than 200 information and technology initiatives across Canada.⁶ These include remote diagnosis, health promotion and education, and training of health care professionals.

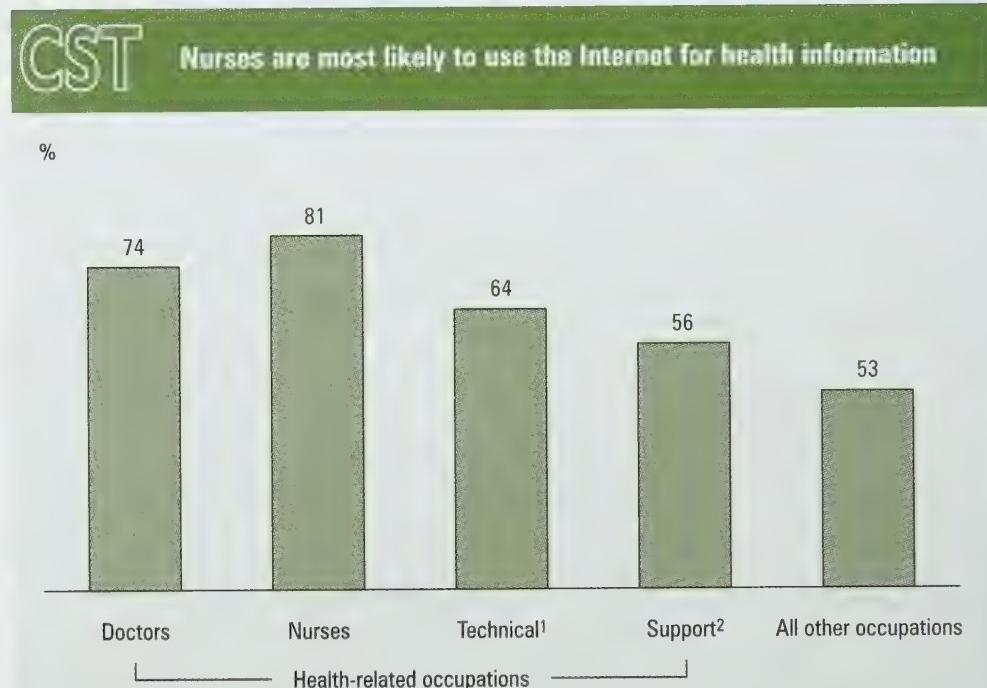
Health care associations have also developed web sites to make up-to-the-minute information available on the Internet. The Canadian Medical Association web site (www.cma.ca), for example, provides physicians with

links to the latest medical journals and offers a specialized search service.⁷

Health searchers look for information on specific diseases

From the countless medical and health topics available on the Net, Canadians most often chose to access the particulars of specific diseases. More than half of those (52%) looking for health information on the Net

2. Because earlier data are not available for individuals, household use must be examined to get a sense of change over time.
3. For information on the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and general Internet use, see the Winter 2001 issue of *Canadian Social Trends*.
4. Health Statistics Division. 2000. "Taking risks/taking care." *Health Reports: How Healthy Are Canadians?* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003) 12, 3: 11-20.
5. Health care workers include doctors, nurses, technicians and those in occupations supporting health care.
6. Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Health Infostructure. December 2000. *Blueprint and Tactical Plan for a pan-Canadian Health Infostructure: A Report on F/P/T Collaboration for the Planning of the Canadian Health Infostructure*. Health Canada [online]. www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ohih-bsi/pubs/2000_plan/plan_e.html (Accessed May 6, 2002.)
7. Green, Deirdre. 2001. "A textbook case for online searching." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 164, 7: 1034 [online edition]. www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/164/7/1034-b (Accessed May 6, 2002.)



1. Includes occupations that provide technical support to professionals in medicine and health (for example, laboratory technologists, respiratory therapists).

2. Includes occupations that provide technical support to pathologists, surgeons, pharmacists, dentists and nurses.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.



searched for new research, diagnosis and treatment options for specific illnesses. Web sites highlighting lifestyle issues, such as diet, nutrition and exercise were also popular (28% of health searchers), as were web tools to match symptoms with specific illnesses or diseases (23%) and web sites that provide information on drugs and medication (20%).

What sites do people visit?

The 2000 GSS asked people about the types of web sites they looked to for health information. Respondents were asked to choose from a list, which included sites run by governments, professional health care associations, non-profit groups, businesses and universities. Overall, people reported visiting all these —

from commercial sites set up by pharmaceutical companies to ones run by governments and non-profit organizations — in similar proportions.

People use the Internet to search for the same types of information for which they had traditionally looked to a medical reference book. Unlike books, however, few web sites are transparent in terms of identifying their sources and their sponsoring or sanctioning organization. Not all web sites are created equally or with the intent of providing unbiased information to the public. While promoting well-being and providing education on health topics are common on the Internet, so too are selling questionable products and advocating experimental treatments with no proven value.⁸

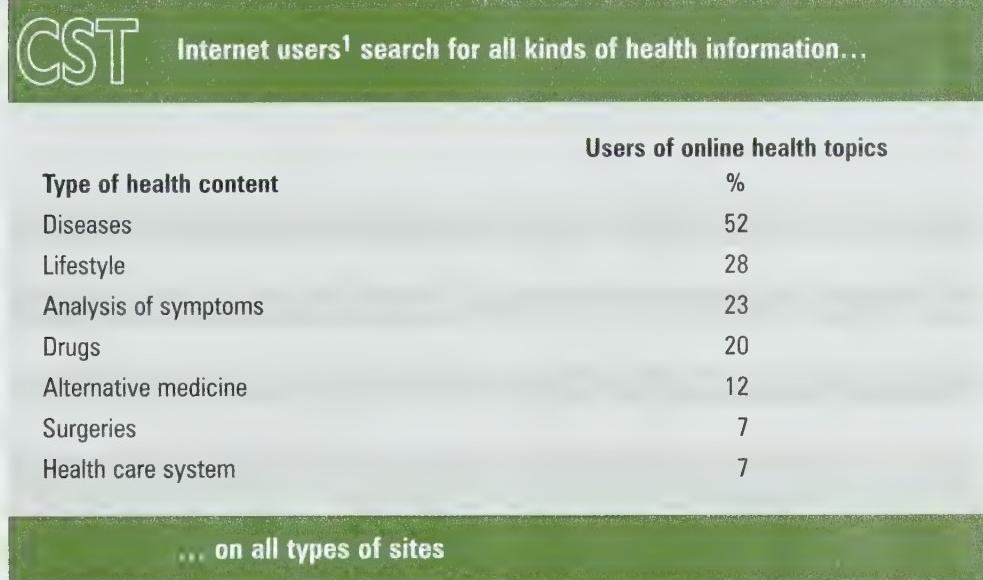
Some topics are easy to find, while others may take much searching

Web sites that receive a lot of hits may be a testament to how well organized and easily navigable they are. Many visits may also reflect a level of trust in an organization and a belief that consumers will find reliable information. When looking for information on the Canadian health care system, 41% of individuals searched Health Canada's web site, while 35% visited professional health care associations, such as the Canadian Medical Association.⁹

While learning about Canada's health care system is therefore fairly simple, knowing where to look for other health-related issues is not as evident. For example, people trying to find information on surgeries searched Health Canada (36%), professional association (31%), business (31%) and university (32%) web sites. While the topic of surgery covers many areas of health care — ranging from the actual procedure to levels of insurance coverage — the many sites visited suggests that finding some types of information takes more time and effort than finding others.

Surfing the web for alternative therapies

Potential for misinformation can increase when people look outside the established health care sector. Two-thirds of individuals searching for alternative therapies reported accessing a site not on the list provided by the survey. They may have done so because the alternative treatment they were looking for was not included on any of the traditional health care sites. The promotion of, and interest in, alternative therapies is not a new phenomenon; the Net simply provides an inexpensive, quick and



Type of site visited

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Health Canada sites | 24 |
| Commercial sites | 21 |
| Professional health associations | 17 |
| Non-profit health organizations | 17 |
| Universities | 16 |
| Other government sites | 11 |
| Other | 7 |

Note: Totals do not add to 100 as respondents were asked to mark all categories that apply.

1. Internet users refer to those who have ever used the Net for health information.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

8. World Health Organization. 1999. op.cit.

9. Respondents were asked to mark all categories that apply.

Millions of web sites contain medical and health-related information, but which ones are credible? Governments have undertaken a number of initiatives to help Internet users navigate through the sea of information. In the United States, the American Accreditation Health-Care Commission is an independent agency that awards seals of approval to health-related web sites that meet strict criteria.¹ The World Health Organization (WHO) has submitted a proposal to create a new top-level domain, *.health*. Under this plan, WHO would distribute the *.health* address to web sites meeting its standards.²

In Canada, the Canadian Health Network, sponsored by Health Canada, offers links to recognized associations, non-profit companies and government sites. The Canadian Health Network also provides this checklist to help Internet users evaluate health information on the Net:³

1. Is the author's name (or organization responsible) clearly stated?
2. Is there potential for bias or conflict of interest?
3. Are commercial links and/or sponsorships clearly stated?
4. Does the site offer a clear statement that health information should not be taken as health advice or a substitute for visiting a health professional?

1. "Health organization approves 13 web sites." December 13, 2001. www.cbc.ca/cgi-bin/templates/view.cgi?category=Consumers&story=/news/2001/12/13/Consumers/HealthWebsites_011213 (Accessed May 6, 2002.)

2. "WHO proposal would raise quality of Internet health information: Dot health could soon be as well known as dot com." Press release WHO/72. November 13, 2000 (online). www.who.int/inf-pr-2000/en/pr2000-72.html (Accessed May 6, 2002.)

3. www.canadian-health-network.ca/html/help/checklist1.html (Accessed May 6, 2002.)

even anonymous way for individuals and organizations to publicize their products and services and for consumers to access non-traditional remedies at the touch of a button.

Some Internet users — possibly those who just used search engines — reported not knowing what site they were looking at when they found new information. When asked about the list of sites they used to find out more about health concerns, just over 80,000 Canadians said they didn't make note of them.¹⁰ At the same time, over half of Net health searchers

reported that the health information they found was very useful. This raises concerns about the spread of false advice and the potential for harm when people make decisions for themselves and their families.

Summary

Canadians have embraced the Internet and with it the opportunity to take a greater role in managing their health, and to become better-informed consumers. With six million Net users searching for health or medical information, the Internet has

established its role in supporting health care. However, not all Canadians are equally likely to take advantage of this new source. Women tend to search for health issues online more than men and households with children are more likely to do so than those without. Canadians who do go online are most likely to look for information on specific diseases.

At a cursory glance, the Internet is just another reference tool, as medical books have been for decades. What is different is that just about anything can be presented as health information; uncertified content multiplies almost daily. Although many steps are being taken to provide consumers with tools to evaluate health-related web sites, it remains difficult to distinguish between "good" web sites and "bad" ones. The challenge for the consumer, the health care sector and policy makers is to navigate through this endless volume of material and separate the authentic from the false.

10. No direct question was asked. This 80,000 includes respondents who replied "just search with key words", "used search engine" or "didn't notice what type of web site it was".



Kathryn Stevenson is Project Manager of the 2000 General Social Survey, Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

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Vox populi: Canadians who speak up

by Susan Crompton

Everyone has an opinion about politics — whether about their local councillor or prime minister — and most people are more than willing to share their views with family and friends. However, far fewer people take the time to present their point of view in a more public forum. According to the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS), only 9% of Canadians aged 15 and over had taken part in a public debate that year, to the extent that they expressed their opinion by writing a letter to a newspaper or public official or calling a phone-in show.

Although this is a small minority of Canadians, their voices carry significant weight. Social scientists maintain that because political opinions may lead to political action, politicians, opinion leaders and policy-makers view them more seriously than public opinions about subjects like gardening, astrology or sports.¹ This article seeks to identify the basic characteristics of those Canadians who speak in a public forum.

Writers/callers are better educated and better off

People generally have a core set of political values by the time they are in their 20s; if they change their opinions,

CST What you should know about this study

This article uses data from the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS). The survey was conducted over a 12-month period, and interviewed more than 25,000 respondents aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces. In a series of five questions relating to their level of interest and involvement in politics, respondents were asked "In the past 12 months, have you written a letter or called a phone-in show to express a point of view?"

Writers/callers: persons aged 15 and over who answered "Yes" to the GSS question quoted above.

it is generally in response to changing personal circumstances.² In other words, a different political opinion at some point in a person's life probably reflects a new job, a new community or change in social status, not his or her age. GSS data show that, generally, Canadians who write a letter or call a phone-in show are no more likely to be younger or older than the rest of the adult population. They are, however, more likely to be English-speakers than are other Canadian adults.³

As well, writers/callers tend to be better educated. Well over half (58%) have a college diploma or university degree, compared with 40% of their

silent counterparts. Since education is closely linked to income, one would expect writers/callers to be more affluent. Indeed, 27% have personal incomes exceeding \$50,000 (versus 18% of non-writers/callers) and 46% have household incomes over \$60,000 (versus 38%). A person's

1. Guy, J.J. 1998. *People, Politics and Government: A Canadian Perspective*. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada. p. 34.

2. ibid. p. 29-30.

3. Refers to the language spoken most often in the home.



| | Writers/callers | Non-writers/callers |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| | % of population aged 15 and over | |
| Men | 52 | 49 |
| Women | 48 | 51 |
| University degree/college diploma | 58 | 40 |
| Personal income over \$50,000 | 27 | 18 |
| Household income over \$60,000 | 46 | 38 |
| Speak only English at home | 84 | 64 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

uniformity of view. For example, a recent study shows that individuals are much more likely to discuss an issue with a group if they sense that the group supports their own opinions.⁶ And while writers/callers are probably better informed (53% of writers/callers have researched political issues compared with only 20% of other adults), their knowledge may not produce a variety of opinions, since they are likely to conform their interpretations to those of their peer group.

Writers/callers are more involved in the community

Information can lead to political "mobilization."⁷ This suggests that writers/callers, who tend to be better informed, may have a greater tendency to "get involved" than other people. Indeed, writers/callers are much more active in the community than non-writers/callers, at 54% versus 30%, respectively.

As volunteers, writers/callers were considerably more likely than non-writers/callers to be involved in the educational and administrative sides of organizations, rather than with fundraising, canvassing or supervising events and activities. Half were working to educate, lobby or influence public opinion (50% versus 33% of

| | Writers/callers | Non-writers/callers |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| | % of population aged 15 and over | |
| Voted in last election (eligible voters only) | 74 | 62 |
| In past 12 months, have... | | |
| talked with other people about politics | 87 | 58 |
| searched for information about political issues | 53 | 20 |
| volunteered for a political party | 10 | 2 |
| volunteered for a group or organization and had... | 54 | 30 |
| done fundraising, canvassing, campaigning | 57 | 48 |
| provided information or helped to educate, | | |
| influence public opinion or lobby on | | |
| organization's behalf | 50 | 33 |
| organized or supervised activities or events | 67 | 60 |
| done consultative or administrative work, | | |
| or were unpaid member of board or committee | 53 | 38 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

socioeconomic status may affect their basic political and social values⁴; it may also influence their confidence in voicing their opinion in a public forum.

While the majority of Canadians like to talk about politics, writers/callers are more passionate about it. Most (87%) say they have discussed politics with other people in the previous 12 months, compared with 58% of other adults. Writers/callers are also five times more likely to have done

volunteer work for a political party in the previous 12 months (10% versus 2%). Not surprisingly, more writers/callers who were eligible to vote had cast their ballots in the last election (74% versus 62%).

These findings are valuable because peer groups influence political values and attitudes to a very large extent, especially if the subject of politics is important to the group.⁵ Peer pressure, however, may produce a certain

4. Luo, X. 1998. "What affects attitudes towards government's role in solving unemployment? A comparative study of Great Britain and the United States." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 10, 2.
5. Guy. 1998. op.cit. p. 32.
6. Hayes, A.F., J. Shanahan and C.J. Glynn. 2001. "Willingness to express one's opinion in a realistic situation as a function of perceived support for that opinion." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 13, 1.
7. Semetko, H.A. and P.M. Valkenburg. 1998. "The impact of attentiveness on political efficacy: Evidence from a three-year German panel study." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 10, 3.

New technologies are connecting citizens to information and to each other. An almost limitless array of newsgroups, discussion groups, chat rooms, and listserves on the Internet allow people the opportunity to express their views in ways unimaginable only a few years ago. People can program their computers to retrieve customized news and information from countless news organizations and databases.

Information exchange is becoming more interactive every day. News networks, for example, regularly ask viewers to e-mail or fax their questions and comments, which are then presented to panelists during the broadcast. In this atmosphere, the interaction of citizens with their politicians and media becomes increasingly important in defining, shaping, and influencing issues. Research generally shows that, in democratic societies, when more people use the media to acquire their political information, agreement about social priorities in the community increases.¹

The fundamental values of both the media and politics are being challenged by the new technologies, accelerating a shift of power away from traditional voices of authority. How the new technologies of mass media information will affect public opinion, political institutions, and public policy remains to be seen.

1. López-Escobar, E., J.P. Llamas and M. McCombs. 1998. "Agenda setting and community consensus: First and second level effects." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 11, 1.

non-writers/callers), and more than half were helping to run the organization, for example, as board or committee members or administrators (53% versus 38%).

The higher level of political interest and community involvement by writers/callers is not surprising. The nucleus of informed political opinion about most issues is usually a "special public" as opposed to a "general public," and the issues in which people become involved tend to be highly specific and local.⁸ Being active in the community generally involves becoming more aware of problems in the neighbourhood — from speeding cars on residential streets to hospital

closings — and local problems may quickly become political issues.

Summary

Over the last few years, both print and broadcast mainstream media have become concentrated among a much smaller number of owners;⁹ observers argue that the variety of views expressed has consequently become more homogeneous. Nevertheless, these remain the most transparent places in which people can express their opinions about public policy. One of the classic methods of applying political pressure remains letter-writing campaigns to the media and as such, the media can assist in

developing groups that share a common goal.¹⁰

However, fewer than one in ten Canadian adults write letters or phone call-in shows to express an opinion in the public forum. Those who do, tend to have higher levels of education and income than people who are more reluctant to present their views. The much higher involvement of writers/callers in community volunteer work and their interest in political issues indicate they are more highly politicized than the average Canadian. They appear to be local opinion-makers whose views may affect the lives of many other people.

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8. Guy. 1998. op.cit. p. 34.
 9. For instance, Canwest Global owns newspapers (including the *National Post*) in addition to the Global television network; Bell Globemedia owns CTV Inc., the *Globe and Mail* and Sympatico. *Financial Post*. March 11, 2002. FP3.
 10. Shaw, D.L., M. McCombs, D.H. Weaver and B.J. Hamm. 1999. "Individuals, groups and agenda melding: A theory of social dissonance." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 11, 1.



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Are families getting richer?

by René Morissette, Xuelin Zhang and Marie Drolet

This article has been adapted from "The Evolution of Wealth Inequality in Canada, 1984-1999," Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series No.187, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019, available on the Statistics Canada web site (www.statcan.ca).

Most studies about financial well-being focus on income. Some studies have examined the extent to which Canadian families live in straitened circumstances, or have difficulty making ends meet, using low-income data;¹ others have focussed on earnings inequality or inequality in family disposable income.² The after-tax income of families is certainly a key indicator of their ability to sustain a given standard of living. However, wealth is another important measure of financial well-being. Wealth provides resources that can be converted into cash to satisfy consumption needs. Furthermore, financial assets can allow a family to absorb the shock of economic stress, such as the loss of a job, sickness, or divorce.

Did changes occur in the wealth of Canadian families between 1984 and 1999? Did the rich continue to get richer? This study examines whether the gap between high-wealth families and low-wealth families increased during that 15-year period. Both wealth and financial wealth are used in the analysis. Wealth, or net worth, is defined as the difference between the value of a family's total current assets and the amount of its total debts. Financial wealth, a subset of total wealth, is defined as net worth minus net equity in housing and net business equity. It measures the assets a family could use relatively quickly to finance its consumption — without selling the house, the contents of the house, or the business — if family income fell substantially or the family encountered unexpected expenditures.

Has wealth inequality increased between 1984 and 1999?
Between 1984 and 1999, average wealth for all families rose 37%. Excluding the top 1% of family units

from the total lowers the growth of average wealth to 31%, while excluding the top 5% of family units lowers it to 28%. The growth in average wealth occurred despite an increase in the percentage of families with zero or negative wealth (from 11% in 1984 to 13% in 1999, for all families).

1. Picot, G. and J. Myles. 1995. "Social transfers, changing family structure, and low income among children." Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper No. 82 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019MIE); and Myles, J. and G. Picot. 2000. "Social transfers, earnings, and low-income intensity among Canadian children, 1981-1996: Highlighting recent developments in low-income measurement." Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper No. 144 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019MIE).

2. Morissette, R., J. Myles and G. Picot. 1994. "Earnings inequality and the distribution of working time in Canada." *Canadian Business Economics*. 2, 3: 3-16; and Beach, C.M. and G.A. Slotsve. 1996. "Are we becoming two societies?" Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute.

Data used in the preparation of this article come from the Assets and Debts Survey of 1984 and the Survey of Financial Security of 1999. In both cases, the sample represents all families and individuals in the 10 provinces, except the following: members of households located on Indian reserves; full-time members of the Armed Forces; and inmates of institutions. Data were obtained for all members of a family aged 15 years and over. Family units consist of economic families¹ and unattached individuals. To make the concept of wealth comparable between the two surveys, the following items were excluded from the 1999 data because they were not collected in the 1984 survey: contents of the home, collectibles and valuables, annuities and registered retirement income funds (RRIFs). Wealth (net worth) is defined as the difference between the value of a family's total current assets and the amount of its total debts.

This report uses the concepts of both median and average to discuss wealth. Both concepts can be used to describe net worth, but each provides a different picture. Median net worth is determined by ranking all family units from highest to lowest. The net worth of the family unit in the middle of the range is the median net worth. Average net worth, on the other hand, is determined by dividing the total net worth of all family units by the number of family units. The more the average exceeds the median, the more the wealthiest family units in the country contribute to the increase in the average. All references to median and average wealth in the study refer to real wealth, that is, adjusted for inflation. For more information on concepts and definitions, see Appendices A and B of *The Assets and Debts of Canadians: An overview of the results of the Survey of Financial Security*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 13-595.

1. An economic family is defined as a group of two or more persons who live together in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption.

Average financial wealth rose at a much faster pace than average net worth, growing 92% between 1984 and 1999. Excluding the top 1% and the top 5% of families, average financial wealth rose 73% and 53%, respectively. As a result, the relative importance of financial wealth as a component of overall net worth rose dramatically during the period. Average increases in wealth mask

significant differences in the *distribution* of wealth, however. Between 1984 and 1999, median and average wealth evolved in dissimilar manners for different types of families. First, both rose much more among families whose major income recipient is a university graduate. Second, both increased among those whose major income recipient is aged 55 and over. Third, both increased among Canadian-born

family units and among foreign-born families who have been living in Canada for 20 years or more but fell among foreign-born families who have been living in Canada for less than 10 years. Fourth, both increased faster among non-elderly couples with no children than among non-elderly couples with children under 18.

The dramatic increase in median wealth and average wealth (56% and 51%, respectively) of families whose major income recipient is at least 65 years old most likely reflects a combination of factors that may have been present in 1999 but not in 1984: larger inheritances received by the 1999 cohort, compared to the 1984 cohort; higher income from private pensions; higher income from the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans and Old Age Security; an increase in the number of two-pension families; and appreciation of housing values over the 1984 to 1999 period.

Young families hit hardest

Although some people enjoyed increases in wealth over the 1984 to 1999 period, others did not. In many population sub-groups, median wealth grew much more slowly than average wealth, indicating increasing inequality within the sub-groups. For instance, among families whose major income recipient was aged 25 to 34, median wealth fell 36% while average wealth fell only 4%. Young couples with children — i.e. those whose major income earner is aged 25 to 34 — experienced drastic changes. Their median and average wealth fell 30% and 20%, respectively. This decline in net worth had considerable consequences: the percentage of these couples with zero or negative wealth rose from 10% in 1984 to 16% in 1999.

Increased wealth inequality — what caused it?

Several factors may have contributed to the growth in wealth inequality

| All family units | 1999 constant dollars | | % change 1984-99 |
|--|-----------------------|---------|---------------------|
| | 1984 | 1999 | |
| Net worth | | | |
| Median | 58,400 | 64,600 | 11 |
| Average | 128,900 | 176,100 | 37 |
| Percent with zero or negative net worth | 11 | 13 | 23 |
| Financial wealth | | | |
| Median | 10,900 | 14,900 | 36 |
| Average | 34,600 | 66,500 | 92 |
| Percent with zero or negative financial wealth | 18 | 20 | 11 |

Sources: Statistics Canada, Assets and Debts Survey, 1984 and Survey of Financial Security, 1999.

that occurred between 1984 and 1999. First, during the 1990s, young people stayed in school longer before entering the labour market in full-time jobs, thus decreasing the number of years during which they had significant incomes. This, and the greater debt load of students,³ probably account for part of the decrease in their median wealth. Second, the booming stock market of the 1990s likely contributed to the rapid upward revaluation of financial assets.⁴ Since financial assets such as stocks and bonds are held predominantly by families at the top of the wealth distribution, this revaluation contributed to the growth of wealth inequality. Third, easier access to credit may have induced some low-wealth families to accumulate debt to finance expenditures, thereby decreasing their net worth. Fourth, increases in contributions to RRSPs made by families in the middle of the wealth distribution may have widened the gap between them and lower-income families.

The aging of the Canadian population between 1984 and 1999, however, partially offset the increase in wealth inequality. It reduced the relative importance of young families

— who have lower than average wealth — and increased the relative importance of families in the middle of the wealth distribution. As a result, it made the distribution of wealth more equal. In the absence of the aging of the population, total wealth inequality would have increased more than it actually did.

Which wealth components contributed the most to wealth inequality?

The growth of wealth inequality occurred in conjunction with substantial changes in the wealth structure. Dramatic shifts in the relative importance of the various components of assets and debts took place between 1984 and 1999. The share of RRSPs as a proportion of wealth increased from 4% to 16%, reflecting the growing popularity of this financial asset. Similarly, the share of stocks, bonds and mutual funds rose from 6% to 11%.

On the debt side, the share of mortgages on principal residences increased to 14% in 1999, up from 10% in 1984, probably due in part to the easier access to mortgage loans by financial institutions. A marked drop

in the relative importance of business equity (from 25% to 17%) and a more moderate decrease in the relative importance of deposits (from 11% to 8%) accompanied these changes.

When identifying which of these components of wealth are major sources of wealth inequality between groups, it is clear that principal residence made by far the biggest contribution, accounting for approximately 35% of overall inequality in both 1984 and 1999. However, the contribution of RRSPs to overall inequality rose from 4% to 15% and that of stocks, bonds and mutual funds from 6% to 13%. As discussed earlier, these types of assets are more easily available to higher-income families. In contrast, the contribution of business equity dropped dramatically, showing a decline from 32% to 21%. Over the same period, the contribution of deposits also fell, from 10% to 6%.

During this period, self-employment in very small businesses without paid help grew tremendously. The move towards self-employed jobs without paid help and with very small assets (e.g. self-employed persons operating a consulting business with a micro-computer and some other electronic equipment at home) decreased the relative importance of business equity and thus its contribution to overall inequality. Since the contribution of RRSPs and stocks, bonds and mutual funds to overall inequality increased between 1984 and 1999, while the contribution of business equity and deposits fell, these four components appear to account for much of the

3. Finnie, R. 2001. "Student loans: The empirical record." *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*. Vol. XXXI, No. 3.

4. Yan, X. 2001. "Understanding saving and wealth accumulation." Income and Expenditure Accounts Division, Statistics Canada. Mimeo graph.

| Characteristics of major income recipient | Median wealth | | | Average wealth | | |
|---|---------------|---------|---------------------|----------------|---------|---------------------|
| | 1984 | 1999 | % change 1984-99 | 1984 | 1999 | % change 1984-99 |
| \$ | \$ | | \$ | \$ | \$ | |
| Education level | | | | | | |
| Not a university graduate | 52,800 | 54,100 | 2 | 119,300 | 145,300 | 22 |
| University graduate | 99,600 | 118,000 | 18 | 189,300 | 289,500 | 53 |
| Age | | | | | | |
| 24 or younger | 3,100 | 200 | -95 | 32,300 | 32,900 | 2 |
| 25-34 | 23,400 | 15,100 | -36 | 69,900 | 67,300 | -4 |
| 35-44 | 73,000 | 60,000 | -18 | 137,600 | 151,900 | 10 |
| 45-54 | 124,000 | 115,200 | -7 | 202,400 | 247,800 | 22 |
| 55-64 | 129,100 | 154,100 | 19 | 210,300 | 303,900 | 45 |
| 65 or older | 81,000 | 126,000 | 56 | 140,700 | 211,900 | 51 |
| Education by age group | | | | | | |
| 25-34 | | | | | | |
| Not a university graduate | 21,200 | 11,100 | -48 | 62,600 | 49,800 | -20 |
| University graduate | 41,200 | 30,900 | -25 | 102,100 | 112,100 | 10 |
| 35-54 | | | | | | |
| Not a university graduate | 80,500 | 65,800 | -18 | 153,200 | 156,000 | 2 |
| University graduate | 130,300 | 144,700 | 11 | 218,700 | 312,300 | 43 |
| Immigration status of major income recipient | | | | | | |
| Canadian-born | 53,900 | 60,500 | 12 | 122,900 | 168,700 | 37 |
| Immigrant residing in Canada | | | | | | |
| 20 years or more | 120,000 | 171,300 | 43 | 194,800 | 285,600 | 47 |
| 10-19 years | 68,000 | 44,500 | -35 | 114,400 | 140,800 | 23 |
| Less than 10 years | 17,600 | 13,100 | -26 | 90,100 | 75,700 | -16 |
| Family type | | | | | | |
| Unattached individuals | | | | | | |
| — elderly | 41,400 | 70,000 | 69 | 78,700 | 138,100 | 76 |
| Unattached individuals | | | | | | |
| — non-elderly | 5,800 | 6,000 | 4 | 47,200 | 63,900 | 35 |
| Couples | | | | | | |
| No children | 71,500 | 101,600 | 42 | 151,200 | 244,200 | 62 |
| Children under 18 | 77,900 | 77,800 | 0 | 149,300 | 195,900 | 31 |
| Children 18 and over | 155,800 | 167,400 | 8 | 251,500 | 312,500 | 24 |
| Elderly couples, no children | 121,100 | 177,500 | 47 | 198,500 | 280,500 | 41 |
| Lone-parent families | 1,900 | 3,700 | 96 | 39,400 | 63,800 | 62 |
| Other family types | 74,200 | 112,700 | 52 | 145,100 | 210,200 | 45 |

Note: All dollar values are expressed in 1999 constant dollars.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Assets and Debts Survey, 1984 and Survey of Financial Security, 1999.

| Wealth component | Share of total net worth | | Contribution to inequality | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|------|
| | 1984 | 1999 | % | 1984 | 1999 |
| Deposits, non-RRSP | 11 | 8 | 10 | 6 | |
| Stocks, bonds and mutual funds, non-RRSP | 6 | 11 | 6 | 13 | |
| RRSPs | 4 | 16 | 4 | 15 | |
| Other investments or financial assets, non-RRSP | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | |
| Principal residence | 49 | 51 | 36 | 34 | |
| Real estate other than principal residence | 12 | 11 | 11 | 11 | |
| Vehicles | 7 | 6 | 3 | 3 | |
| Business equity | 25 | 17 | 32 | 21 | |
| Debts | | | | | |
| Mortgage on principal residence | -10 | -14 | -3 | -4 | |
| Other debt | -7 | -7 | -3 | -2 | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | |

Source: Authors' calculations from the Assets and Debts Survey, 1984 and the Survey of Financial Security, 1999.

growth in wealth inequality during the period.

Summary

Although some segments of the population enjoyed increases in wealth, others did not, with the result that between 1984 and 1999, wealth distribution became more unequal. Some groups, such as young couples with children and recent immigrants, have suffered substantial declines. The growing proportion of young couples with children who have zero or negative wealth suggests that a non-negligible fraction of today's young families may be vulnerable to negative shocks, having no accumulated savings that can provide liquidity in periods of economic stress.

Median wealth and average wealth rose much more among family units whose major income recipient is a

university graduate; they both fell among family units whose major income recipient is aged 25 to 34 and increased among those whose major income recipient is aged 55 and over. While principal residence was the biggest contributor to wealth inequality in both 1984 and 1999, RRSPs contributed the most to the increase in wealth inequality. The aging of the Canadian population between 1984 and 1999, on the other hand, made the distribution of wealth more equal.



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Suicide deaths and attempts

by Stéphanie Langlois and Peter Morrison

This article has been adapted from "Suicide deaths and suicide attempts" in the January 2002 issue of *Health Reports*, vol. 13, no. 2 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003). Please see *Health Reports* for a full bibliography.

Suicide is a tragic and perplexing phenomenon that touches the lives of many Canadians. Around the world and across the centuries, suicide has stolen lives and inflicted grief and guilt on those left behind. The reasons for suicide and notions of what to do about it have varied with time and place, but suicide continues to exact a relentless toll.¹

According to researchers and professionals, suicide is associated with a complex array of factors such as mental illness, social isolation, a previous suicide attempt, family violence, physical illness, and substance abuse. Some risks vary with age, while others occur in combination. Approximately 90% of those who commit suicide are suffering from depression, another mental illness or a substance abuse disorder, which could potentially be diagnosed and treated.

CST What you should know about this study

Data in this article come mainly from Statistics Canada's Vital Statistics Database, Hospital Morbidity Database, and Person-oriented Information Database. Supplementary data are from Statistics Canada's Adult Correctional Services and Homicide Surveys, and the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, as well as from the World Health Organization. Population estimates used to calculate rates were provided by Statistics Canada's Demography Division, and were adjusted for net census undercoverage and non-permanent residents.

This article examines suicide deaths and hospitalized suicide attempts among Canadians aged 10 years or older between 1979 and 1998. Both suicide and attempted suicide rates are presented for men and women of various ages to highlight the demographic groups most at risk. The social, economic and psychological factors associated with suicide and suicide attempts are not discussed in this study.

Suicide rate fairly stable over past 20 years

In 1998, approximately 3,700 Canadians took their own lives, an average of about 10 suicides per day. Although

rarely discussed, suicide results in the loss of more lives than many other causes of death: between 1993 and 1998, for example, suicide claimed considerably more lives than motor vehicle accidents. As well, Canadians are seven times more likely to die from suicide than to be the victim of a homicide. In fact, from adolescence to middle age, suicide is one of the

1. Knowledge Exchange Network. *Summary of National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action*. <http://www.mentalhealth.org/publications/allpubs/SMA01-3518/default.asp> (Accessed March 8, 2002.)

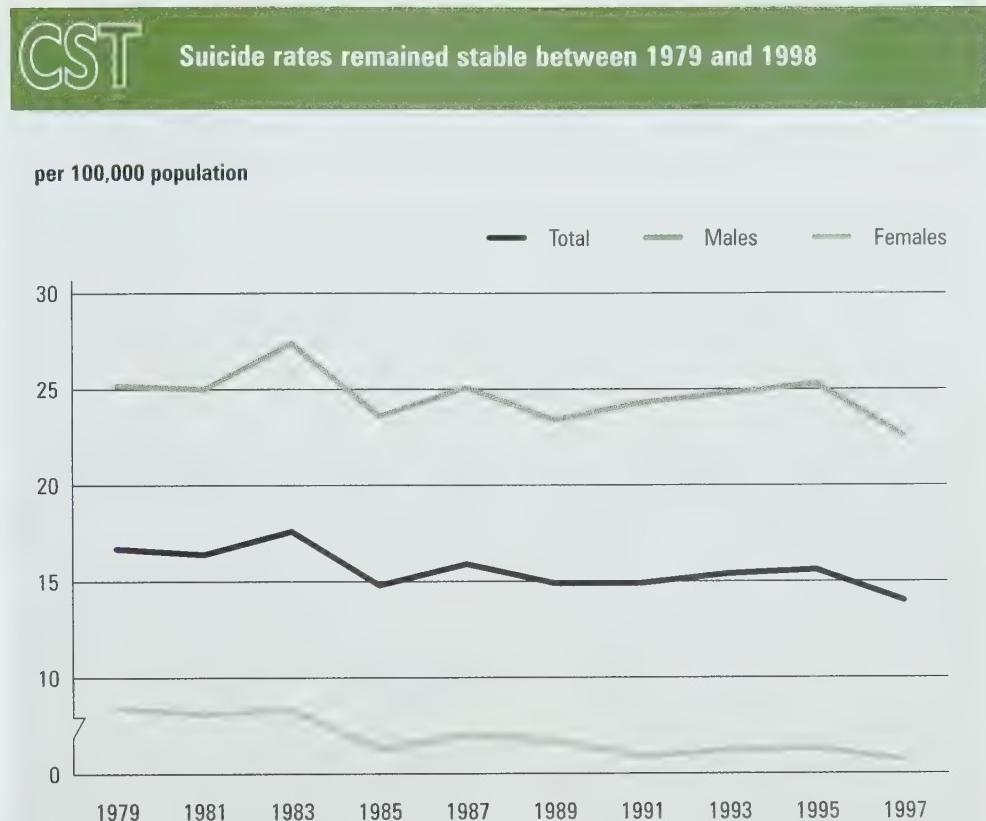
leading causes of death for both men and women.

The total number of suicide deaths reported among Canadians aged 10 or older in 1998 represented a rate of 14 suicides per 100,000 population.² Since 1979 the rate has remained fairly stable with a peak of 18 in 1983.

The risk of suicide is not the same for all members of the population. Certain groups may be considered "high-risk" because they often have higher than average suicide rates: Aboriginal peoples, the young and the elderly, inmates, homosexuals, people who have previously attempted suicide and those suffering from mental disorders.³ While a number of studies have attempted to estimate suicide rates for those at high-risk, accurate national rates are not available for these groups.

Men much more likely than women to commit suicide

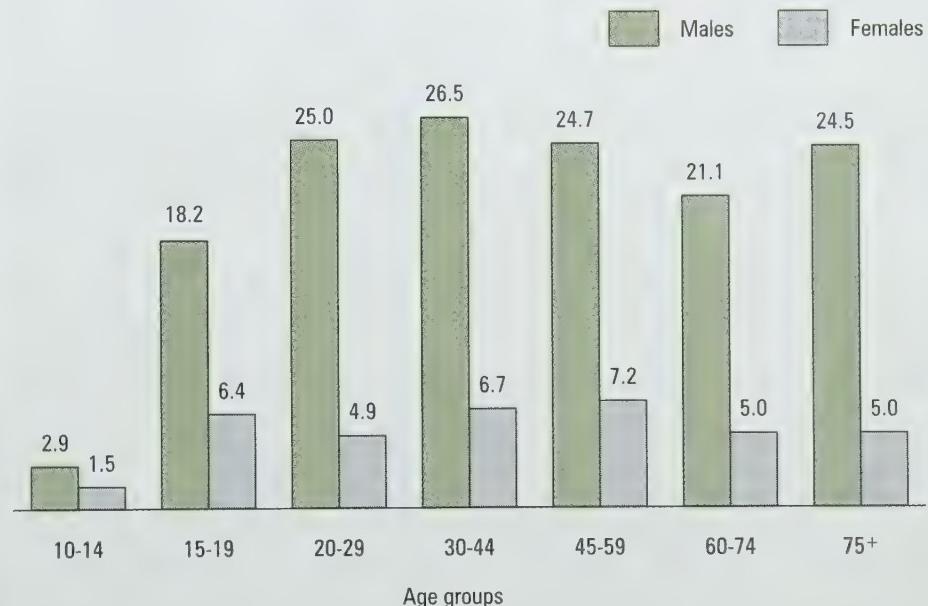
Earlier studies have found men to be at least four times more likely than women to commit suicide.⁴ Men are also more likely to die in their first attempt. In 1998, the rate for Canadian males aged 10 or older was 23 suicides per 100,000 compared with



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics Database, 1979 to 1998.



per 100,000 population



Source: Statistics Canada, Vital Statistics Database, 1998.

6 per 100,000 for females. In every age group, men had a higher suicide rate than did women.

In 1998, suicide was the leading cause of death for men between the ages 25 to 29 and 40 to 44, and for women aged 30 to 34. And for ages 10 to 24, it was the second leading cause of death for both sexes, surpassed only by motor vehicle accidents.

A major concern among parents and health professionals is the high rate of suicide among young persons in their late teens and early twenties. Because suicide is a leading cause of death during these years, the loss of potential years of life is high, particularly for men.⁵ In 1997, suicide ranked third after cancer and heart disease in potential years of life lost for men; for women, it was fourth after cancer, heart diseases, and motor vehicle traffic accidents.⁶

Quebec records highest rate of suicide

Historically, suicide rates have tended to increase from east to west. However, since 1993, Quebec has had the highest provincial rate. In 1998, Quebec's 21 suicide deaths per 100,000 population aged 10 or older was significantly above the national average of 14. While Alberta's rate of 16

was also significantly higher than the Canadian average, Newfoundland, Ontario and British Columbia reported rates below the national level. The Yukon and the Northwest Territories had rates of 26 and 56 suicides per 100,000 population aged 10 or older (5 and 35 deaths, respectively).⁷ These provincial and territorial differences in suicide rates likely reflect social, economic and cultural factors.

Men use more violent methods to kill themselves

In 1998, the most common means of suicide in Canada was suffocation (39%), principally hanging or strangulation; poisoning, which includes drug overdoses and inhalation of motor vehicle exhaust, was the next most common (26%). Firearms were the third leading means of committing suicide (22%). This contrasts with the

situation in the United States, where nearly 60% of people who killed themselves did so using guns.

Men tend to use more violent methods to take their lives than do women: 26% of men used firearms, compared with 7% of women. In contrast, women most often committed suicide by poisoning: in 1998 they were nearly twice as likely as men to die using this method, at 41% versus 22%. The most common method for men was suffocation (40%); among women, this method ranked second, accounting for 34% of suicides.

Between 1979 and 1998, the proportion of men who committed suicide with firearms declined from 41% to 26%, while those who died of suffocation rose from 24% to 40%. The pattern among women was similar with the most dramatic increase in suffocation (from 19% to 34%).

5. Potential years of life lost is calculated by subtracting the age at which a death occurs from an arbitrary age, often 75.
6. Health Statistics Division. 2001. "Death — Shifting trends." *Health Reports: How Healthy Are Canadians?* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003) 12, 3: 41-46.
7. Some of the difference in provincial suicide rates may be attributed to variations in coding practices for causes of death, as well as in the timeliness of reporting mortality data. Particular caution is necessary when analyzing suicide rates for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Because of their small populations and the low number of suicide deaths, slight changes in the number of suicides may cause dramatic fluctuations in the rates when no substantial changes have actually occurred.



Suffocation was the most common method of suicide for men

| | Total | % | Males | % | Females | % |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| Total suicide deaths | 3,698 | 100.0 | 2,925 | 100.0 | 773 | 100.0 |
| Suffocation | 1,433 | 38.8 | 1,171 | 40.0 | 262 | 33.9 |
| Poisoning | 965 | 26.1 | 646 | 22.1 | 319 | 41.3 |
| Firearms | 816 | 22.1 | 765 | 26.2 | 51 | 6.6 |
| Jumping from high places | 160 | 4.3 | 115 | 3.9 | 45 | 5.8 |
| Drowning/submersion | 122 | 3.3 | 79 | 2.7 | 43 | 5.6 |
| Cutting/piercing instruments | 59 | 1.6 | 48 | 1.6 | 11 | 1.4 |
| Other ¹ | 143 | 3.9 | 101 | 3.5 | 42 | 5.4 |

1. Includes jumping or lying before moving objects, fires/burns, crashing of motor vehicles, other or unspecified means, late effects of self-inflicted injury, explosives.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics Database, 1998.



Most suicide attempts do not end in death

Many people who try to kill themselves do not die in the attempt. While it is difficult to determine exactly how many attempts do occur, the World Health Organization recently estimated as many as 20 attempts for every suicide death.⁸

In this article, the total number of suicide attempts is underreported because the analysis does not include cases that involved outpatient treatment in hospital emergency rooms or other medical facilities. As well, patients who attempted suicide in psychiatric hospitals but did not require acute care hospitalization are not included. And, of course, cases for which no medical attention was sought could not be counted.

In 1998–99, a total of just over 23,000 hospitalizations of Canadians aged 10 or older were related to suicide and intentional self-inflicted injuries. In the vast majority of these cases (about 98%), the patient did not die during their hospital stay. Based on these figures, the crude hospitalization rate for attempted suicide that year was 87 per 100,000 population aged 10 or older.

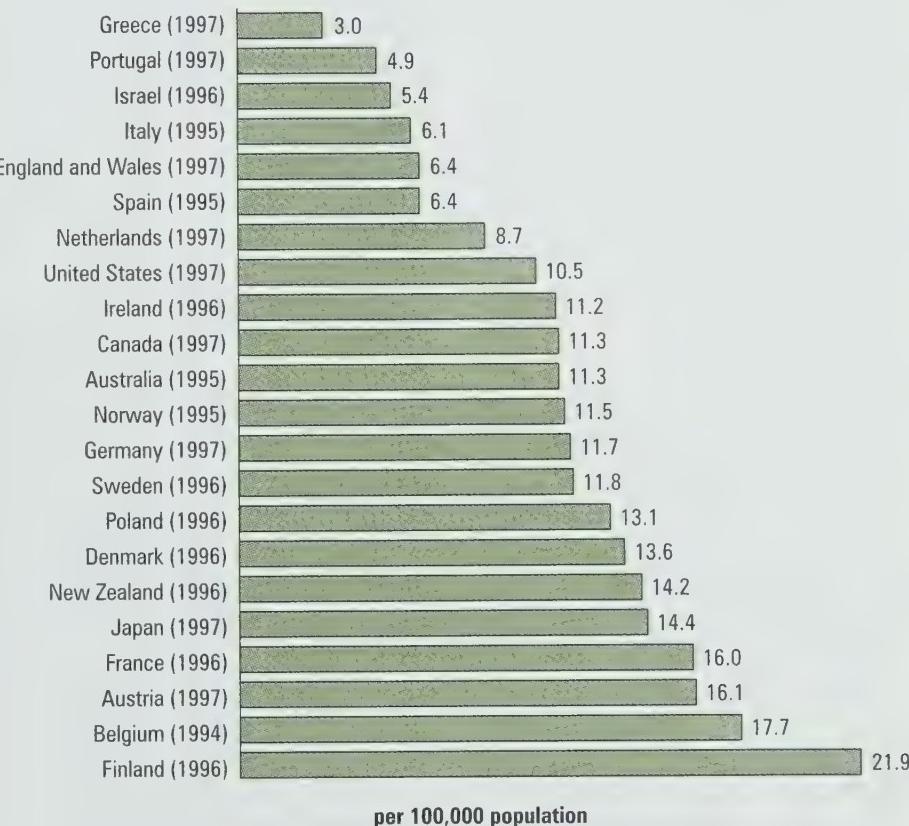
Suicide attempts typically involve less lethal methods than do completed suicides. In 1998–99, poisoning accounted for 83% of hospitalizations for a suicide attempt. The figure for women was somewhat higher than that for men: 88% versus 76%. Cutting or piercing instruments were next most common (10%), although the proportion of males using such methods (13%) exceeded the proportion of females (8%).

According to data from the World Health Organization, Canada's suicide rate for the entire population ranked in the middle of 22 western industrialized countries. Age-standardized suicide rates ranged from 3 per 100,000 in Greece (1997) to 21.9 per 100,000 in Finland (1996). Canada's 1997 suicide rate of 11.3 per 100,000 population was similar to those reported in Australia, Ireland, Norway, Germany and Sweden. The suicide rate in the United States was slightly below these figures at 10.5. However, international comparisons should be interpreted with caution as methods of death certification can vary.

The overrepresentation of men in suicide deaths was consistent across all 22 countries. The male-female ratio ranged from 2 to 1 in the Netherlands to 7 in 1 in Greece, with most around 3 or 4 to 1 (4 in Canada).

Suicide rates for males varied from 5 per 100,000 in Greece to 35 in Finland. Female suicide rates ranged from 1 per 100,000 in Greece to 9 in Finland. Again, Canada ranked in the middle: 18 per 100,000 males and 5 per 100,000 females.

Australia, Canada and Ireland have similar suicide rates



Source: World Health Organization database.

8. World Health Organization. *Prevention of Suicidal Behaviours: A Task For All*. http://www5.who.int/mental_health/main.cfm?p=0000000141 (Accessed June 7, 2002.)

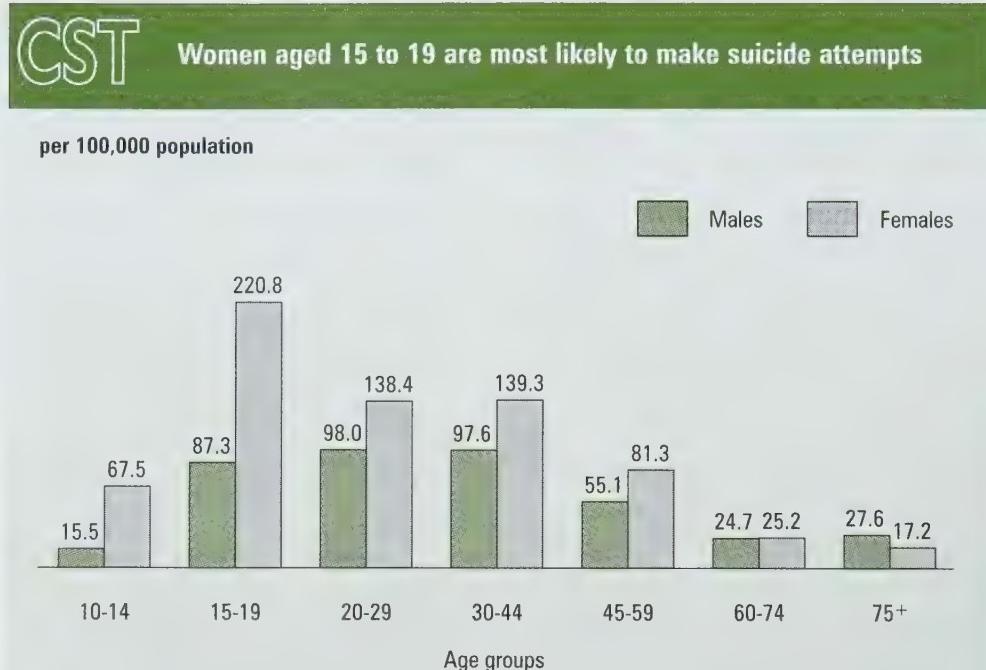
Women more likely to attempt suicide

While men were far more likely than women to take their own lives, women's hospitalization rates for attempted suicide were substantially higher than men's. In 1998–99, the hospitalization rate for attempted suicide was 108 per 100,000 women aged 10 or older and 70 per 100,000 for their male counterparts. Some research has indicated that women are more likely than men to make suicide attempts that are actually intended to be non-fatal, but this view remains controversial.⁹

The hospitalization rate for attempted suicide among women peaks at ages 15 to 19. In 1998–99, the rate was 221 per 100,000 for girls in this age group, over twice the rate for 15- to 19-year-old boys (87 per 100,000). Even among 10- to 14-year-olds, the hospitalization rate for suicide attempts was much higher among girls than boys: 68 versus 16 per 100,000.

These figures parallel results from the 1996–97 National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, which found that among young adolescents, girls are considerably more likely than boys to have suicidal thoughts. An estimated 8% of girls and 5% of boys aged 12 to 13 (approximately 44,000) reported that they had contemplated suicide in the previous year.

Men's hospitalization rates for attempted suicide were highest at ages 20 to 44 (about 98 per 100,000), but were still well below those of women in the same age range (about 139 per 100,000). Up to age 60, rates for women exceeded those for men in every age category. At older ages,



Source: Statistics Canada, Hospital Morbidity Database, 1998–99.

CST Murder—suicide

Homicide, the murder of one person by another, is rare in Canada. Even more rare are homicides followed by the suicide of the offender. Research indicates that the closer the ties between victim and offender, the greater the ensuing guilt and the likelihood of a suicide after the homicide, particularly if the homicide victim is a child.¹ Of the 503 separate homicide incidents (an incident could involve more than one victim) reported to police in 1999, 40 (8%) were murder-suicides.² These incidents resulted in the deaths of 52 homicide victims, where the accused, predominantly male (93%), committed suicide. Almost 9 out of 10 of these murder-suicides were family-related, a trend that has shown relatively little change over the last 20 years.

In 1999, one in four murder-suicide incidents involved more than one victim, and the accused in each of these multiple victim murder-suicides was male. In close to half (48%) of all murder-suicide incidents, men killed their spouse; in 15% of cases, men killed their child(ren). Men killed their spouse and child(ren) in 13% of cases. There were no murder-suicides in which women killed a spouse, but there were two incidents in which women killed their child(ren).²

9. Canetto, S. and I. Sakinofsky. 1998. "The gender paradox in suicide." *Suicide and Life-threatening Behaviour* 28, 1: 1-23; and Moscicki, E.K. 1994. "Gender differences in completed and attempted suicides." *Annals of Epidemiology* 4: 152-158.

1. Gillespie M., V. Hearn and R. Silverman. 1998. "Suicide following homicide in Canada." *Homicide Studies* 2, 1: 46-63.

2. Fedorowycz, O. 2000. "Homicide in Canada, 1999." *Juristat* 20, 9: 1-17 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002).

hospitalization for suicide attempts was less common. There was little difference between rates for men and women at ages 60 to 74, but by age 75 or older, men's rate surpassed women's.

Hospitalization rate lowest in Quebec

At 49 per 100,000 population aged 10 or older, Quebec reported the lowest hospitalization rate for suicide attempts in 1998–99. This contrasts sharply with Quebec's suicide death rate, which was the highest among the provinces.

Newfoundland and Nova Scotia also had relatively low hospitalization rates for suicide attempts and Prince Edward Island's rate did not differ significantly from the national rate of 89 per 100,000. The remaining provinces reported rates above the national level. Saskatchewan recorded the highest rate at 123 per 100,000, followed by British Columbia with 120.

In the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, hospitalization rates for attempted suicide were much higher: 169 and 219 per 100,000, respectively. But as with suicide death rates, these figures are based on relatively small numbers and can, therefore, fluctuate substantially from year to year.

Approximately 9% of patients hospitalized more than once for attempting suicide

Total discharges from hospitals for suicide attempts are not equivalent to the number of individuals who were hospitalized, as one person can make several attempts and end up in hospital more than once during a year. Thus, the 22,887 hospital discharges for attempted suicide in 1998–99 involved approximately 20,000 individuals. About 9% had been discharged more than once during that year for a suicide attempt. Among these repeat attempts, about 23% of both men and women had been discharged on at least three occasions following a suicide attempt.

Earlier research has found that most people who attempt suicide, even repeatedly, do not die this way. On the other hand, although an attempt is a predictor of suicide, many who do commit suicide have not previously tried to take their life. Thus, it may be that the underlying motivations and emotional state of people who attempt but do not complete suicide differ from those whose attempt ends in death.

According to hospital records, nearly half of patients admitted for attempted suicide had a primary diagnosis of a mental illness, including manic depression (bipolar disorder), schizophrenia, personality disorder, or alcohol or drug dependence syndrome. Patients hospitalized for attempting suicide are likely referred to psychologists or psychiatrists, suicide intervention centres, or other health and social support institutions.

Summary

In 1998, approximately 3,700 Canadians committed suicide, an average of about 10 suicides per day. Around the same time, about 20,000 individuals were hospitalized because of suicide-related injuries. Suicides occurred among children as young as 10 (the youngest age included in the analysis) and among seniors aged 75 or older. While men were three to four times

more likely than women to kill themselves, women were nearly one and a half times more likely to be hospitalized for attempting suicide. The vast majority of people hospitalized for suicide-related injuries did not die during their stay in hospital.

Men most likely to commit suicide were between the ages of 20 and 59; they were closely followed by those aged 75 or older. For women, the age range most at risk was somewhat narrower: 30 to 59. Hospitalization for attempted suicide tended to occur somewhat earlier in life: between the ages of 15 and 44 years for both sexes. Teenage girls were most likely to be hospitalized for having tried to kill themselves. The differences between men and women and various age groups in the rates and methods of suicide suggest differences in underlying problems, in responses to stressful situations, and in reaching out for help.



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Case processing in criminal courts

Adult criminal courts are handling fewer cases in 1999–2000, but their level of workload is increasing as more complex cases are taking longer to process. Adult criminal courts in the seven provinces and two territories that participated in the study processed over 378,000 cases involving over 811,000 charges. Courts took a median of 105 days to resolve cases in which an adult faced three or more charges, compared with only 74 days for a case involving a single charge. Cases involving a preliminary inquiry (i.e. to determine if there is sufficient evidence to proceed to trial in a higher court) had a median elapsed time of 233 days, three times as long as the 77 days taken to complete cases without a preliminary inquiry. Similarly, the median processing time for cases decided through a trial process was 150 days, double the 77 days for non-trial cases.

Juristat
Catalogue no. 85-002-XIE
Vol. 22, no. 1



Police personnel in Canada

Canada had just over 57,000 police officers on June 15, 2001, 2% more than on the same date in 2000. Just over half of this gain was due to a 5% increase in the number of RCMP officers, who account for about one-quarter of all police officers. Female recruitment continues to increase and women now represent about 15% of all police officers.

Canada's rate of 184 officers per 100,000 population in 2001 was lower than those of both the United States (247 in 1998) and England and Wales (240 in 2001). Among the provinces, the most police per capita were found in Saskatchewan (193 officers per 100,000 population), Manitoba (192), Quebec (188) and Ontario (187). The fewest were in Newfoundland and Labrador (144) and Prince Edward Island (147). Among the larger metropolitan areas, the most officers per capita were recorded in Thunder Bay (195), Regina (181), Toronto (181) and Windsor (180), and the lowest in Sherbrooke (111) and Chicoutimi-Jonquière (119).

Police Resources in Canada, 2001
Catalogue no. 85-225-XIE



Farmers leaving the field

Farm employment as a main job fell to 313,000 between 1998 and 2001, a 26% drop in three years. Although widespread, the decrease in farm employment did not touch all provinces equally. Most affected were Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario. While farm employment has fallen, farm output has not, explained in part by fewer but larger and more productive farms. Another likely reason for the drop in farm employment is that individuals are increasingly operating their farms as second jobs. Not only have principal farm operators switched out of farming as a main activity, but spouses and children appear to have moved to off-farm work as well.

Why are farmers leaving their farms? Partly, the very strong demand for workers in industries such as manufacturing and transportation has offered jobs in cities where they can apply their skills. As well, farmers have not seen an increase in profits since 1996, pushing some out of the field. Operating expenses have risen to all-time highs, offsetting the modest gains in cash receipts. Finally, as a group, farmers are relatively old, with a large proportion approaching retirement.

Perspectives on Labour and Income
Catalogue no. 75-001XIE
Vol. 3, no. 2



Participation in cultural activities: The role of language

Language appears to play an important role in the cultural activities of Canadians. In 1998, French speakers were more likely to attend symphony and classical music concerts or festivals. For example, one-third of French speakers versus only one-fifth of English speakers attended at least one festival in 1998. French speakers were also more likely than English speakers to have attended choral music, children's performances or other popular stage performances. The only exception was theatrical performances, for which English speakers had a higher participation rate.

English speakers, however, were more likely to visit a museum or other heritage institution than were French speakers. As well, Canadians whose home language was English were more likely to read than were those whose home language was French. In 1998, nine out of 10 English speakers had read a newspaper at least once in the previous 12 months, while 79% had read a magazine and 69% had read a book. In comparison, 86% of French speakers had read a newspaper, 75% a magazine and 60% a book. English speakers were also significantly more likely to have used library services.

Focus on Culture
Catalogue no. 87-004XIE
Vol. 13, no. 3

SOCIAL INDICATORS

| | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| ECONOMY | | | | | | | |
| <i>Annual % change</i> | | | | | | | |
| Real Gross Domestic Product ¹ | 4.7 | 2.8 | 1.6 | 4.3 | 3.9 | 5.1 | 4.4 |
| Wages, salaries and SLI | 2.6 | 3.4 | 2.4 | 5.7 | 4.7 | 5.9 | 6.8 |
| Personal expenditures on goods and services ¹ | 3.0 | 2.1 | 2.6 | 4.6 | 3.0 | 3.4 | 3.6 |
| Consumer Price Index | 0.2 | 2.2 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 0.9 | 1.7 | .. |
| Savings rate (%) | 9.4 | 9.2 | 7.0 | 4.9 | 4.4 | 4.2 | 3.9 |
| Prime lending rate | 6.88 | 8.65 | 6.06 | 4.96 | 6.6 | 6.44 | 7.27 |
| 5-year mortgage rate | 9.53 | 9.16 | 7.93 | 7.07 | 6.93 | 7.56 | 8.35 |
| Exchange rate (with U.S. dollar) | 1.366 | 1.372 | 1.364 | 1.385 | 1.484 | 1.486 | 1.485 |
| ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | | |
| Consolidated ² government expenditures on the environment ³ (\$ millions) | 8,398.4 | 8,665.5 | 8,381.1 | 8,703.2 | 8,518.5 | 8,910.7 | 8,957.1 |
| Consolidated ² government expenditures (\$ millions) | 373,760.0 | 381,158.0 | 371,692.5 | 372,695.6 | 386,147.5 | 398,406.4 | 416,646.2 |
| Consolidated ² government expenditures on the environment ³ (% of total expenditures) | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.1 |
| Greenhouse gas emissions (kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents) | 641,000 | 658,000 | 672,000 | 682,000 | 689,000 | 699,000 | .. |
| Billions of public transit passengers | 1.35 | 1.37 | 1.35 | 1.38 | 1.41 | 1.43 | 1.49 |
| Total consumption of refined petroleum products ⁴ used for transportation (thousand m ³) | 49,115 | 49,596 | 51,062 | 52,574 | 54,182 | 55,711 | 55,899 |
| Ozone (% of National Ambient Air Quality Objectives maximum acceptable levels over one hour) | 92 | 94 | 89 | 91 | 94 | .. | .. |
| JUSTICE | | | | | | | |
| <i>Rate per 100,000 population⁵</i> | | | | | | | |
| Total Criminal Code offences | 9,114 | 8,993 | 8,914 | 8,453 | 8,137 | 7,729 | 7,655 |
| Property offences | 5,250 | 5,283 | 5,264 | 4,867 | 4,556 | 4,263 | 4,070 |
| Violent offences | 1,046 | 1,007 | 1,000 | 990 | 979 | 955 | 982 |
| Other Criminal Code offences | 2,817 | 2,702 | 2,650 | 2,596 | 2,602 | 2,510 | 2,603 |
| <i>Average days to process case through courts</i> | | | | | | | |
| Adults | 135 | 141 | 148 | 157 | 150 | 152 | 158 |
| Youths ⁶ | 111 | 118 | 117 | 105 | 107 | 111 | 102 |
| <i>Average length of sentence per case</i> | | | | | | | |
| Adults (days in prison) | 116 | 122 | 126 | 129 | 137 | 130 | 127 |
| Youths (days of open and secure custody) | 88 | 82 | 79 | 74 | 75 | 72 | 71 |
| CIVIC SOCIETY | | | | | | | |
| Government expenditures on culture (\$ millions) ⁷ | 5,373 | 5,318 | 5,241 | 5,054 | 4,910 | 5,021 | .. |
| Households reporting expenditure on newspapers (%) | .. | .. | 71.0 | 71.0 | 69.0 | 66.9 | 65.0 |
| Households reporting expenditure on live performing arts ⁸ (%) | .. | .. | 36.0 | 38.0 | 37.0 | 35.0 | 35.9 |
| Households reporting expenditure on admission to museums and other heritage activities ⁸ (%) | .. | .. | 26.0 | 36.0 | 35.0 | 34.8 | 33.9 |

.. Data not available.

1. Data in chained (1997) dollars.

2. Does not include CPP and QPP.

3. Includes expenditures on water purification and supply.

4. Refers to diesel oils, light heating oils, residual fuel oils, aviation gasoline, fuel for gas turbines and motor fuel.

5. Revised rates based on updated population estimates.

6. Alberta is excluded.

7. Excludes intergovernmental transfers. Data in 1990 dollars. Municipal spending is on a calendar year basis.

8. A definitional change occurred in the categories of Live Staged Performances and Admissions to museums, zoos, historic sites, etc. in 1996, reducing the size of these two categories.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Public Institutions Division; Transportation Division; Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division; CANSIM II Tables 408-0001, 408-0002 and 128-0003; *National Income and Expenditure Accounts*, Catalogue no. 133-001PPB; *Canadian Crime Statistics*, 2000, Catalogue no. 85-205-XIE, *Youth Court Statistics*, 2000-01, Catalogue no. 85-002-XIE and *Adult Criminal Court Statistics*, Catalogue no. 85-002-XIE; *Government Expenditure on Culture*, Catalogue no. 87F0001XPB; Survey of Family Expenditures, 1992 and 1996, Survey of Household Spending, 1997 and 1998; and Environment Canada, 2001, *Canada's Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990-1999*; and Pollution Data Branch.

LESSON PLAN

Suggestions for using Canadian Social Trends in the classroom

Lesson plan for "Time alone"

Objectives

- To become aware of why more people are living alone.
- To discuss why people are spending more time alone.

Methods

1. In 2001, 12.3% of the population aged 15 and over lived alone compared with 2.6% in 1951. Discuss what has contributed to the nearly five-fold increase in the proportion of people living alone.
2. The largest group of Canadians living alone are seniors (mostly widows), followed by people aged 25 to 44. Survey the class to find out how many have grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters or other family members who live alone.
3. Many seniors live on their own because their spouse died. But what about the younger age groups? What are some of the social factors that may contribute to 25- to 44-year-olds living alone?
4. In 1998, people aged 15 and over spent 5.9 hours alone (excluding personal care activities such as sleeping, getting dressed or personal hygiene), compared with 4.4 hours in 1986. Discuss why, regardless of whether people live alone or not, they are spending more time alone in the late 1990s than they did in the mid-1980s. What are the social and personal implications of this trend?

Using other resources

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Is your community child-friendly?

by Alice Peters



Much research has focussed on the socio-economic impact that a child's neighbourhood has on their future.^{1,2,3} Studies have also shown that parents' perceptions of crime and other social problems in their neighbourhood affect their sense of belonging and the approach they take to raising their children.⁴ How do Canadian parents, especially mothers, feel about their own neighbourhoods? Do they feel they are safe places to raise their children? Do they believe they have good neighbours who will watch out for their children and help them when they are in need? This study uses data from the 1999 National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth to

1. Sampson, R.J., S.W. Raudenbush and F. Earls. 1997. "Neighbourhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy." *Science* 277: 918-924.
2. Connor, S. and S. Brink. 1999. "Understanding the early years." *Community Impacts on Child Development*. Human Resources Development Canada.
3. Sampson, R.J., S.W. Raudenbush and F. Earls. 1998. "Neighbourhood cohesion — does it help reduce violence?" *National Institute of Justice Research Preview*. National Institute of Justice: Washington, D.C.
4. Such as the work done by Harvard University's Center for Childhood Development and the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods.

This article is based on data from the 1999 National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY). The NLSCY is conducted by Statistics Canada in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada. It is designed to develop a better understanding of the factors that contribute to a child's development over time. In 1999, over 30,000 children were sampled for the third cycle of the NLSCY. Demographic questions about the household were asked to determine the "person most knowledgeable" (PMK) about the child (usually the mother). In fact, 94% of the PMKs were female. Questions about neighbourhood safety, which cover length of residency in the neighbourhood, satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to bring up children, safety, social cohesion and neighbourhood problems, were completed by the PMK. For reasons of simplicity, the PMK is usually referred to as "parent" in this article.

For more information, see Statistics Canada, *National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth: Overview of Survey Instruments for 1999* (Report no. 89F0078XIE1999003).

examine how parents (usually the mother) feel about various aspects of their neighbourhood, especially how they feel about bringing up children there, as well as their assessment of problems in their neighbourhoods and their sense of "community spirit."

Most believe they live in good neighbourhoods

With increased numbers of lone-parent families and two-parent families where both parents work outside the home, neighbourhoods are very different than in previous generations. We live in an increasingly busy world, where many people leave their homes early in the morning to go to their jobs and return to take on another set of responsibilities at home. In this environment, leisurely chats over the fence with neighbours are probably much less frequent than they were a generation ago. Yet, in general, respondents view their neighbourhoods in a very positive light. Most parents believe their neighbourhood

is excellent (51%) or good (33%) as a place to bring up children. They also have strong perceptions that people are willing to help their neighbours (88% strongly agree or agree), and that they can count on adults in their neighbourhood to watch out that children are safe and don't get in trouble (86% strongly agree or agree). Parents had especially positive perceptions that there were adults in the neighbourhood that children can look up to: 20% of respondents strongly agreed, and 63% agreed, with only 8% disagreeing.

Similar results are found when parents were asked if their neighbours would keep their eyes open for possible trouble when they were away (88% strongly agree or agree). People were a little less likely, however, to perceive their neighbourhood as one in which the neighbours get together to deal with problems: 15% of respondents strongly agreed and 53% agreed, but 22% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

These findings are consistent with previous research. A 1999 study found

that a majority of Canadians (60%) were firm in their belief that crime in their neighbourhood was lower than crime in other Canadian communities, and a further 28% believed that crime was about the same as in other neighbourhoods.⁵

Higher incomes mean more neighbourhood satisfaction

Because the type and location of housing people choose depend on what they can afford, income has a large impact on a family's perceptions of safety and how fearful they are of being victims of crime. Studies from the "Moving to Opportunity" experiment in the U.S., which helped families from housing projects move to much more affluent neighbourhoods, found that parents and children who moved to better neighbourhoods experienced large improvements in measures of well-being, such as overall resident satisfaction, lower crime incidence and improved health.^{6,7}

It is not surprising, then, that parents with higher incomes feel more positively about their neighbourhoods. In 1999, 63% of those who had incomes above \$80,000 felt that their neighbourhood was an excellent place to bring up children compared with 35% of those with incomes below \$15,000. Those with incomes above \$80,000 were also much more inclined to strongly agree or agree that neighbours are willing to help

-
5. Statistics Canada. 2000. *A Profile of Criminal Victimization: Results of the 1999 General Social Survey* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-553-XIE).
 6. Katz, L.F., J.R. Kling and J.B. Liebman. 2001. "Moving to Opportunity in Boston: Early Results of a Randomized Mobility Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116, 6: 607-654.
 7. Ludwig, J., G. Duncan and P. Hirshfeld. 2001. "Urban Poverty and Juvenile Crime: Evidence from a Randomized Housing Mobility Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116, 6: 655-680.

The 1999 General Social Survey examined Canadians' perceptions of crime and personal safety. The survey asked respondents how safe they felt when walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark; waiting for or using public transportation alone after dark; and being home alone at night. In 1999, 54% of those who used public transportation alone at night indicated that they were not at all worried when waiting for or using it; 43% felt very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood at night; and 80% of Canadians indicated that they were not at all worried when home alone at night.

Feelings of safety from crime for population aged 15 and over, 1999

| | Population 15 and over (000s) | % of population 15 and over |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Total | 24,260 | 100 |
| While waiting for/using public transportation alone after dark, how do you feel about your safety from crime? ¹ | | |
| Not at all worried | 3,306 | 54 |
| Somewhat worried | 2,390 | 39 |
| Very worried | 438 | 7 |
| Don't know/not stated | 42 | 1 |
| Total | 6,176 | 100 |
| How safe do you feel from crime when walking alone in your area after dark? ¹ | | |
| Very safe | 7,964 | 43 |
| Reasonably safe | 8,322 | 45 |
| Somewhat unsafe | 1,627 | 9 |
| Very unsafe | 412 | 2 |
| Don't know/not stated | 63 | -- |
| Total | 18,388 | 100 |
| While alone in your home in the evening or at night, how do you feel about your safety from crime? ² | | |
| Not at all worried | 19,104 | 80 |
| Somewhat worried | 4,374 | 18 |
| Very worried | 496 | 2 |
| Don't know/not stated | 44 | -- |
| Total | 24,018 | 100 |

-- Amount too small to be expressed.

Figures may not add to total due to rounding.

1. Based on responses for people who engage in these activities.

2. Excludes the estimated 1% of the population that is never home alone.

Source: Statistics Canada. 2000. *A Profile of Criminal Victimization: Results of the 1999 General Social Survey* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-553-XIE).

each other (93%), compared with those with incomes below \$15,000 (66%), and that there are adults in the neighbourhood for children to look up to, at 89% for the higher income parents versus 64% for the lower income parents.

Older respondents were also more likely to rank their neighbourhoods highly. This result is to be expected, since older people have had more time in which to accumulate financial resources and therefore have more options in housing choices. Of those aged 40 and over, 55% felt that their neighbourhood was excellent as a place to bring up children, while 43% of those aged 25 to 29 felt the same. Those aged 40 and over were also much more likely to strongly agree or agree that neighbours deal with problems together, at 70%, compared with 58% of those aged 25 to 29.

Also, ties to our neighbourhoods seem to strengthen with the passage of time. The longer people had been residents, the more likely they were to feel positively about their neighbourhoods. Only 42% of those who had lived in their neighbourhood for less than a year thought it was an excellent place to bring up children, compared with 60% of those who had lived in their neighbourhood 10 years.

Housing type affects neighbourhood satisfaction

Many researchers believe that housing design has an impact on how we interact with our neighbours. Modern planning techniques, for example, have helped create suburbs filled with lower-density, single-family houses and city cores with high-density multi-storied apartment buildings. Previous studies of the frequency of people's contact with other residents of their neighbourhood have identified the importance of the type of housing a person occupies, length of residence at that address, and the proximity of

family members in the neighbourhood as factors that affect how neighbours interact.⁸

So it is not surprising that parents living in single family, semi-detached or garden homes were more likely to rate their neighbourhood excellent as a place to bring up children, at 55%, compared with 28% of those who lived in duplexes or apartments. Residents of single family, semi-detached or garden homes were also much more likely to believe that their neighbours deal with problems together, are willing to help each other, and would watch out for trouble in their absence. They also felt more certain that their neighbours kept an eye out for children's safety and that there were adults in the neighbourhood children could look up to.

Community involvement increased neighbourhood satisfaction

Parents who did volunteer work were more likely to rank their neighbourhoods highly than those who did not: 58% of those who volunteered ranked their neighbourhood as an excellent place to bring up children, versus 48% of non-volunteers. Those who volunteered were also more likely to strongly agree or agree that neighbours deal with problems together and are willing to help each other, that there are adults in the neighbourhood for children to look up to, that neighbours watch out that children are safe, and that neighbours watch out for trouble when other people are not at home.

Summary

How a person feels about their neighbourhood is subjective and difficult to measure. Everyone has a different reaction that varies according to their age, level of education and income

8. Kremarik, F. Summer 2000. "The other side of the fence." *Canadian Social Trends*. p. 20-24.

| | Strongly agree or agree | |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| | Single family, semi-detached or garden homes | Duplexes or apartments |
| | % | |
| Neighbours deal with problems together | 70 | 53 |
| There are adults for kids to look up to | 86 | 68 |
| Neighbours are willing to help each other | 91 | 75 |
| Neighbours watch out that children are safe | 89 | 72 |
| Neighbours watch out for trouble in their absence | 91 | 73 |

... as do those who volunteer

| | Involved in volunteer work | Not involved in volunteer work |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | % | |
| Neighbours deal with problems together | 76 | 64 |
| There are adults for kids to look up to | 91 | 81 |
| Neighbours are willing to help each other | 94 | 87 |
| Neighbours watch out that children are safe | 91 | 86 |
| Neighbours watch out for trouble in their absence | 94 | 87 |

Source: Statistics Canada, National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, 1999.

status. Income largely determines the type and location of housing that a person chooses. Those with higher incomes, therefore, tend to live in better houses and better locations, and are more satisfied with their neighbourhoods. Respondents living in single family, semi-detached or garden homes were much more likely to perceive their neighbourhood as an excellent place to bring up children than were those who live in duplexes or apartments.

In general, however, respondents had very positive perceptions about their neighbourhood as a place to bring up children. Most believed that their neighbours were willing to help each other and watch out that children were safe. Respondents aged 40 and older ranked their neighbourhoods highest. As well, the longer people had

lived in their neighbourhoods, the more likely they were to feel positively about them. Parents with higher levels of education and those who were involved in volunteer work were also more likely to rank their neighbourhoods highly.



Alice Peters is an analyst with Canadian Social Trends.

Underweight Canadians

by Janet Che

As a society, we are obsessed with the "perfect" body. While for men this implies mostly strength and muscle, for women, the often-perceived "ideal" calls for,

among other things, an impossibly lean physique. Although most people recognize that skinny does not necessarily equal healthy, the urge to conform to society's ideals tends to be

strong. And we live in a culture that prizes thinness — for women at least.

Culture, however, is only one factor that influences body weight. Others include genetic, socioeconomic, and

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What you should know about this study

Data in this article come from the National Population Health Survey (NPHS), which collects information about the health of Canadians every two years. It covers residents in all provinces and territories, except persons living on Indian reserves, on Canadian Forces bases, and in some remote areas.

Underweight: Refers to the segment of the population with a body mass index (BMI) of less than 20.

Household income: Household income groups were based on household size and total household income from all sources in the 12 months before the interview.

Distress: The distress index was based on six questions. Respondents were asked: "During the past month, how often did you feel: so sad that nothing could cheer you up? nervous? restless or fidgety? hopeless? worthless? that everything was an effort?" The response options — all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, a little of the time, and none of the time — were given weights of 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0, respectively. The score could range from 0 to 24. Respondents scoring 7 or more were classified as feeling distressed; about 15% of underweight

respondents and 12% of those with acceptable weight fell into this category.

Smoking status: Individuals were asked if they smoked cigarettes daily, occasionally, or not at all. This article used two categories: current smoker (daily or occasional) and non-smoker (former smokers or those who never smoked).

Leisure-time physical activity

Active: Those who averaged 3.0 or more kcal/kg/day of energy expenditure. This is approximately the amount of exercise that is required for cardiovascular health benefit (for example, jogging for an hour three times a week).

Moderately active: Those who averaged between 1.5 and 2.9 kcal/kg/day. They might experience some health benefits but little cardiovascular benefit (for example, walking for an hour four times a week).

Inactive: Those whose daily energy expenditures were below 1.5 kcal/kg (for example, gardening for an hour twice a week).

behavioral reasons as well as health status and the presence of chronic disease. Whatever the factors, though, warnings about and awareness of the health consequences of excess weight abound,¹ while much less attention seems to be paid to the implications of being underweight. In part, this may be because it is not as prevalent as being overweight. But also, because thinness is so commonly regarded as an ultimate goal, it is hard to think of it as a health concern.

Research on the health and well-being of underweight Canadians is limited, and experts' opinions on the topic vary. Some researchers state that the health risks of being moderately underweight are comparable to that of being quite overweight.² Others claim that being very thin could be associated with chronic conditions and shortened life span.³ On the other hand, some maintain that low

Body mass index (BMI) is calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. To convert pounds to kilograms, divide by 2.2, and to arrive at height in meters, divide inches by 39.4.

For example, to calculate the BMI of someone who weighs 130 pounds and is 65 inches (5'5") tall, you have to do the following:

1. 130 pounds/2.2 = 59 kilograms
2. 65 inches/39.4 = 1.65 meters
3. 1.65 x 1.65 = 2.72
4. 59 kilograms/2.72 = 21.7 BMI

Therefore, a person with these measurements has a body mass index of 22, which is in the acceptable range.

Canadian Guidelines for Healthy Weights uses BMI as a measuring unit of weight for adult Canadians. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the National Institute of Health (NIH) in the United States also use BMI in their weight guidelines, although the cutoffs are different than those used in Canada.

BMI guidelines

| Canadian | International (WHO and NIH) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Underweight: under 20 | Underweight: 18.5 or under |
| Acceptable weight: 20 to under 25 | Acceptable weight: 18.5 to under 25 |
| Some excess weight: 25 to 27 | Overweight: 25 to under 30 |
| Overweight: over 27 | Obese: 30 or over |

In general, BMI is not calculated for pregnant women. While some reports have restricted the calculation of BMI to people aged 20 to 64, this article, like some others, includes individuals aged 15 and over.¹

Limitations of BMI: BMI has been widely used to study the relationship between weight and health. Overall, it works well as a simple surrogate measure of body fat in most middle-aged adults. However, it is not perfect. As BMI does not discriminate between muscle and fat, some people with a high BMI may be very muscular with little body fat. Others, whose BMI is in the acceptable range, may have little muscle mass and too much body fat. BMI is probably a less valid measure for body-builders, athletes, adolescents who are still growing, and older adults.

1. McElhone, S., J.M. Kearney, G. Chetti et al. Winter 1999. "Body image perception in relation to recent weight changes and strategies for weight loss in a nationally representative sample in the European Union." *Public Health Nutrition* 2 (1a): 143-151; Statistics Canada. Winter 1999. "Personal health practices: Smoking, drinking, physical activity and weight." *Health Reports: How Healthy Are Canadians?* 11, 3 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003): 83-90; Statistics Canada. Winter 2000. "Taking risks/taking care." *Health Reports: How Healthy Are Canadians?* 12, 3 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003): 11-20.

1. Heart disease, high blood pressure, type II diabetes, gall bladder disease, and some types of cancer are often associated with excess weight. Pi-Sunyer, F.X. 1993. "Medical hazards of obesity." *Annals of Internal Medicine* 119, 7: 655-660; Berg, F.M. July/August 1995. "Obesity costs reach \$45.8 billion." *Healthy Weight Journal* 6; Rabkin, S.W., Y. Chen, L. Leiter, L. Liu and B.A. Reeder. Canadian Heart Health Surveys Research Group. 1997. "Risk factor correlates of body mass index." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 157 (1 suppl.): S26-S31; Must, A., J. Spadano, E.H. Coakley, A.E. Field, G. Colditz and W.H. Dietz. 1999. "The disease burden associated with overweight and obesity." *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 282, 16: 1523-1529.
2. Troiano, R.P., E.A. Fronville Jr., J. Sobal and D.A. Levitsky. 1996. "The relationship between body weight and mortality: A quantitative analysis of combined information from existing studies." *International Journal of Obesity* 20: 63-75.
3. American Dietetic Association. *Healthy Weight, Healthy You.* www.eatright.org/nfs/nfs12.html (accessed November 21, 2001).

body weight is linked with low mortality rates and there is little evidence of harm in being very thin.⁴

Using data from the 1998–99 National Population Health Survey (NPHS), this article explores the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the underweight population. It also compares selected health characteristics of underweight Canadians with those of individuals whose weight is considered acceptable.

Nearly one in 10 Canadians report being underweight

According to the 1998–99 NPHS, almost one in 10 (9%) Canadians aged 15 and over, 2.2 million people, were underweight (i.e. they have a body mass index, or BMI, of less than 20). While the proportion of overweight individuals has increased steadily over time (from 17% in 1985 to 30% in 1998–99)⁵, that of underweight Canadians has dropped from 13% to 9% during these years.

Because there is a natural tendency to gain weight with age, young people are the most likely group to be underweight. Indeed, in 1998–99, about 28% of 15- to 19-year-olds⁶ and 14% of 20- to 24-year-olds were underweight, compared with 8% of those aged 65 and over. The likelihood of being underweight is lowest, at about 5%, between the ages of 45 and 64.

| | Population aged 15 and over ¹ '000 | Underweight population |
|------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| | | % |
| Total | 23,600 | 9 |
| Sex | | |
| Males | 11,700 | 5 |
| Females | 11,900 | 13 |
| Age | | |
| 15–19 | 2,100 | 28 |
| 20–24 | 1,900 | 14 |
| 25–44 | 9,400 | 8 |
| 45–64 | 6,700 | 5 |
| 65 and over | 3,500 | 8 |
| Marital status | | |
| Single, never-married | 6,300 | 17 |
| Married, common-law | 14,000 | 6 |
| Widowed | 1,400 | 9 |
| Separated/divorced | 1,900 | 7 |
| Living arrangements | | |
| Living alone | 3,500 | 8 |
| Living with immediate family | 17,400 | 9 |
| Living with others | 2,700 | 12 |
| Household income | | |
| Low | 3,000 | 12 |
| Middle | 5,800 | 9 |
| High | 13,100 | 8 |
| Missing | 1,800 | 14 |

1. Excludes pregnant women.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Population Health Survey, 1998–99.

4. Manson, J.E., W.C. Willett, M.J. Stampfer, G.A. Colditz, D.J. Hunter, S.E. Hankinson, C.H. Hennekens and F.E. Speizer. 1995. "Body weight and mortality among women." *The New England Journal of Medicine* 333, 11: 677-685; Byers, T. 1995. "Body weight and mortality." *The New England Journal of Medicine* 333, 11: 723-724.
5. The data from 1985 are from the General Social Survey, while data from 1998–99 are from the National Population Health Survey.
6. As teenagers' bodies have not yet finished growing, BMI measures for them should be interpreted with caution.

Besides age, other factors may also be associated with being underweight, such as sex, marital status, living arrangements and household income. But when these factors were held constant, the odds of being underweight still remained higher for the 15- to 19-year-old and the 20- to 24-year-old groups than for those aged 65 and over.

Low body weight at younger ages could be the result of numerous factors, including a more active lifestyle, a higher metabolic rate, or weight

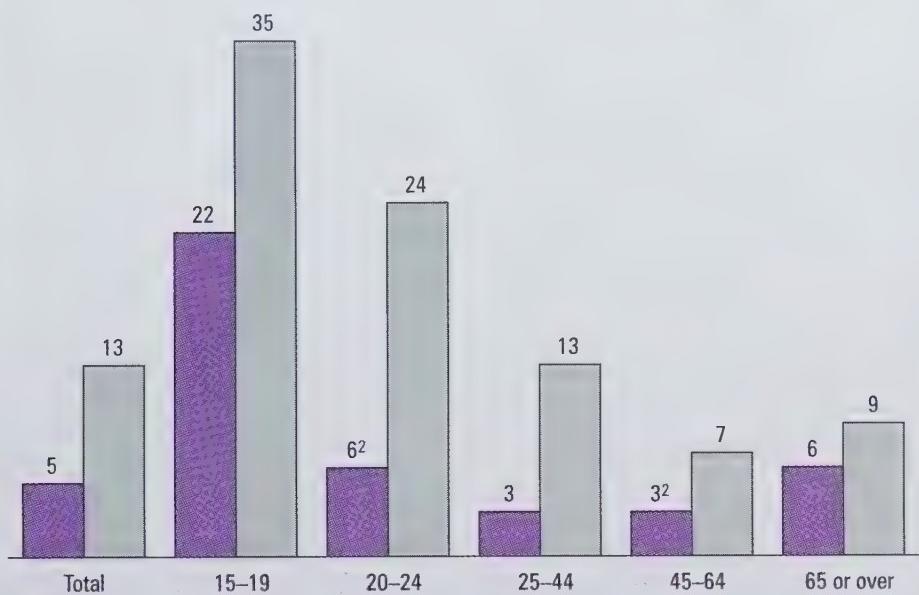
concerns during adolescence. In the pursuit of thinness, young people are more likely to engage in weight control measures such as dieting, smoking or excessive exercising.

Women substantially more likely to be underweight

According to the 1998–99 NPHS, women were far more likely than men to be underweight (13% versus 5%, respectively). While men's larger muscle and bone mass may account for some of the disparity, women are also

% of Canadians aged 15 and over who are underweight¹

Male Female



1. Population excludes pregnant women.

2. Subject to high sampling variability.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Population Health Survey, 1998-99.

generally more likely to try to lose weight.⁷ These gender differences persisted even after the effects of the other socio-demographic factors were taken into consideration: the odds of women being underweight were nearly three times that of men.

The difference in the proportion of underweight men and women occur in all age groups, although to different degrees. At 18 percentage points, the gap peaks among 20- to 24-year-olds (24% of females versus 6% of males are underweight in this age group) then starts declining. By the time individuals are 45 or over, the difference in the percentage of underweight men and women diminishes greatly.

The fact that young women are considerably more likely to be underweight than young men is not surprising. It is a well-documented fact that teenage boys and girls have

different ideals regarding body shape and weight. For example, a study of college students showed that, while the majority wished to change their weights, males wanted to gain but females wanted to lose weight.⁸ Some researchers maintain that the gender difference in body shape and weight aspiration may start as early as age nine.⁹

Underweight people more likely to be found among singles

Both being single and living with people other than immediate family are associated with being underweight.¹⁰ Singles were more than twice as likely to be underweight as their married or common-law counterparts: 17% versus 6%, respectively. Similarly, individuals who lived with immediate family were less likely to be underweight (9%) than those who lived

with others (12%). People who do not have the support of family members and who probably eat alone more, may simply not bother to spend time cooking nutritious meals for themselves. After holding all other factors constant, singles still had a significantly higher likelihood of being underweight than married people, but the effect of living arrangements was no longer significant.

Income also appears to have a bearing on being underweight. Nearly 12% of Canadians who lived in low-income households were underweight compared with 8% of their high-income counterparts.¹¹ Lower levels of income can lead to poor nutrition if there is insufficient money to buy the right quantity and quality of food. And poor nutrition is a known cause of being underweight. However, when the effects of sex, age, marital status and living arrangements were taken into account, the association between income and being underweight was no longer statistically significant. In other words, different levels of income did not influence the odds of being underweight.

- 7. Green, K.L., R. Cameron, J. Polivy, K. Cooper, L. Liu, L. Leiter and T. Heatherton. Canadian Heart Health Surveys Research Group. 1997. "Weight dissatisfaction and weight loss attempts among Canadian adults." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 157 (1 suppl.): S17-S25.
- 8. Conner-Greene, P.A. 1988. "Gender differences in body weight perception and weight-loss strategies of college students." *Women and Health* 14, 2: 27-42.
- 9. Hill, A.J., E. Draper and J. Stack. 1994. "A weight on children's minds: Body shape dissatisfactions at nine years old." *International Journal of Obesity* 18: 383-389.
- 10. Immediate family refers to a spouse/partner, a parent or a child.
- 11. For a household of three or four people, total household income is defined as low if it is \$19,999 or under, middle income \$20,000 to \$39,999 and high income \$40,000 or over.

| | Odds ratio ¹ |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sex | |
| Males | 1.00 |
| Females | 3.04* |
| Age | |
| 15–19 | 3.78* |
| 20–24 | 1.63* |
| 25–44 | 1.03 |
| 45–64 | 0.66* |
| 65 and over | 1.00 |
| Marital status | |
| Single, never-married | 1.44* |
| <i>Married, common-law</i> | 1.00 |
| Widowed | 0.96 |
| Separated/divorced | 1.06 |
| Living arrangements | |
| Living alone | 0.95 |
| <i>Living with immediate family</i> | 1.00 |
| Living with others | 1.19 |
| Household income | |
| Low | 1.18 |
| Middle | 1.05 |
| High | 1.00 |

* Significantly different from reference category at the 95% confidence level.

1. Presents the odds of individuals with particular characteristics being underweight relative to the odds of a benchmark group, when all other variables in the model are held constant.

Note: Italics represent reference category, for which odds ratio is always 1.00. Analysis is based on population 15 and over, excluding pregnant women.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Population Health Survey, 1998–99.

are more likely than others to smoke because they use smoking as a method to control and lose weight.¹² In a culture that favors thinness, the temptation to use smoking to curb appetite and hence weight gain may be high for some. This is particularly so for young females, who were found to have taken up smoking for the sake of losing weight and staying slim.¹³ Indeed even when other factors were held constant, the odds of an underweight individual smoking were 1.3 times the odds of a person with acceptable weight.

Underweight people slightly more likely to rate their health as fair or poor

In 1998–99, the proportion of underweight Canadians who rated their health as fair or poor was somewhat higher than that of individuals with acceptable weight: 8% versus 7%. When other factors were controlled for, the odds that an underweight person would rate their health as fair or poor were 1.3 times higher than the odds of someone with acceptable weight.¹⁴

12. Varner, L.M. January/February 1996. "Smoking — yet another weight loss strategy?" *Healthy Weight Journal* 13:19.

13. Crisp, A.H., C. Halek, P. Sedgwick, C. Stavrakaki, E. Williams and I. Kiossis. 1998. "Smoking and pursuit of thinness in schoolgirls in London and Ottawa." *Postgraduate Medicine Journal* 74: 473-479; Crocker, P., N. Kowalski, K. Kowalski, K. Chad, L. Humbert and S. Forrester. 2001. "Smoking behaviour and dietary restraint in young adolescent women: The role of physical self-perceptions." *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 92, 6: 428-432; Boles S. and P. Johnson. 2001. "Gender, weight concerns and adolescent smoking." *Journal of Addictive Diseases* 20, 2: 5-14.

14. An individual's subjective assessment of well-being gives a good indication of one's general health. According to some researchers, self-rated health is considered a valid and reliable indicator of health.

Higher proportion of current smokers among underweight Canadians

Lifestyle choices and behaviour have a powerful influence on both weight and health. Physical activity, for example, contributes to overall well-being, while smoking adversely affects health and is a strong risk factor for several diseases and mortality.

According to the 1998–99 NPHS, about 23% of both underweight Canadians and those with acceptable

weight were physically active during their leisure time. The two groups also had similar proportions of moderately active and inactive members, implying that physical activity is not more likely to be associated with being underweight than with having acceptable weight.

The proportion of current smokers, however, was higher among underweight Canadians (33%) than among individuals with acceptable weight (29%). Perhaps underweight people

| | <u>Odds ratio¹</u> |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Current smoker | |
| Acceptable weight | 1.00 |
| Underweight | 1.32* |
| Active leisure-time activity | |
| Acceptable weight | 1.00 |
| Underweight | 0.88 |
| Poor/fair self-perceived health | |
| Acceptable weight | 1.00 |
| Underweight | 1.33* |
| Distress | |
| Acceptable weight | 1.00 |
| Underweight | 1.10 |

* Significantly different from reference category at the 95% confidence level.

1. Presents the odds of individuals with particular characteristics being underweight relative to a benchmark group when all other variables are held constant.

Note: Italics represent reference category, for which odds ratio is always 1.00.
Analysis is based on population 15 and over, excluding pregnant women.

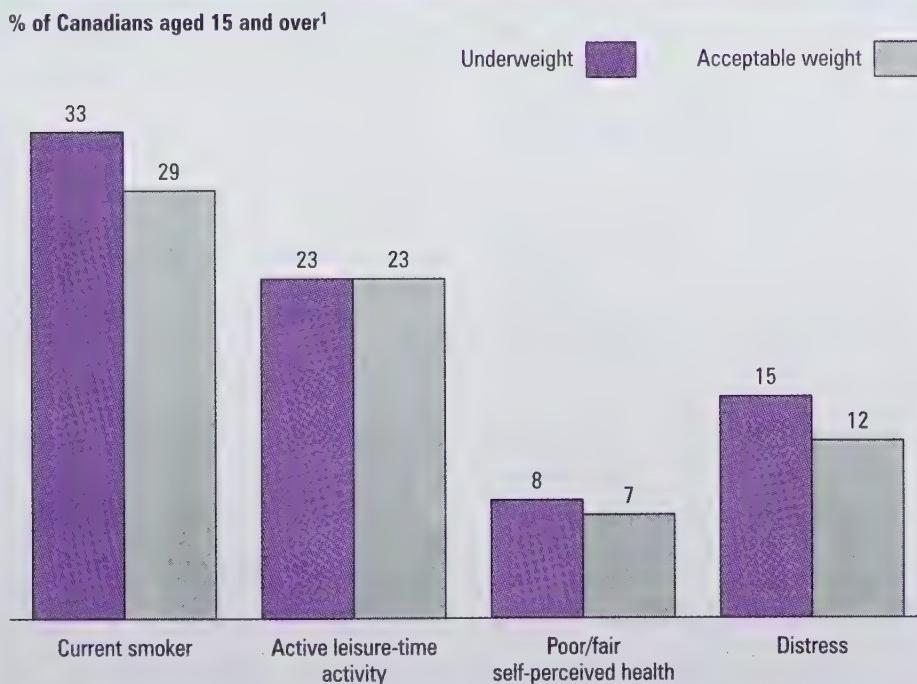
Source: Statistics Canada, National Population Health Survey, 1998–99.

People who were underweight were also more likely than those with acceptable weight to report feelings of distress (15% versus 12%). However, after taking into account the other socio-demographic variables, this difference was no longer significant.

Summary

Close to one in 10 Canadians were underweight in 1998–99, a rate slightly lower than in 1985. Underweight people were most likely to be found among youth under 25 years of age, females, singles, people living with others who are not immediate family, and those in low-income households.

When other factors were held constant, sex, age, marital status, current smoking and self-perceived health were found to be associated with being underweight. For example, the odds of being a current smoker and of having poor or fair self-perceived health were higher among underweight Canadians than among those with acceptable weight. On the other hand, the odds of being physically active and having feelings of distress were not significantly different between the two groups.

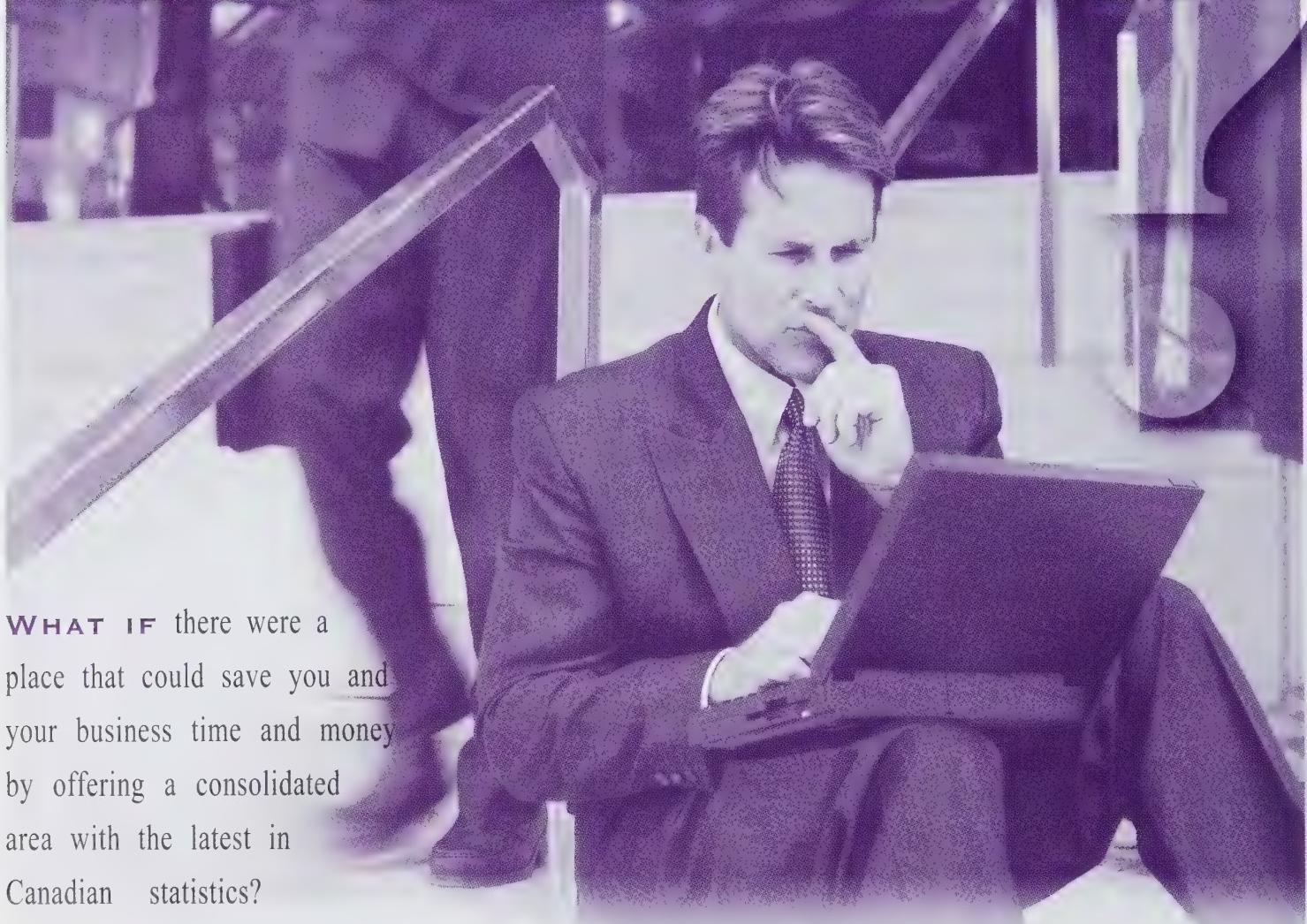


1. Population excludes pregnant women.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Population Health Survey, 1998–99.

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On the edge: Financially vulnerable families

by René Morissette

This article has been adapted from "Families on the financial edge," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, July 2002, vol. 3, no. 7, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-001-XIE.

This article examines the extent to which Canadian families are financially vulnerable to adverse events such as a sudden loss of income or unexpected bills. Families with low income or little financial wealth have fewer resources and are more exposed than others to shocks such as permanent layoffs, unforeseen expenses, health problems and family break-up. This article first looks at families that have no financial wealth, then considers the most vulnerable families of all: low-income families with no or only modest financial wealth. This helps identify which families are likely to face short-term financial difficulties if sudden unfavourable events were to occur.

CST What you should know about this study

Data used in the preparation of this article come from the Assets and Debts Survey of 1984 and the Survey of Financial Security of 1999. In both cases, the sample represents all families and individuals in the 10 provinces, except the following: members of households located on Indian reserves; full-time members of the Armed Forces; and inmates of institutions. Data were obtained for all members of a family aged 15 years and over. Family units consist of economic families (a group of two or more persons who live together in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption) and unattached individuals. To make the concept of wealth comparable between the two surveys, the following items were excluded from the 1999 data because they were not collected in the 1984 survey: contents of the home, collectibles and valuables, annuities and registered retirement income funds (RRIFs). For more information on concepts and definitions, see Appendices A and B of *The Assets and Debts of Canadians: An overview of the results of the Survey of Financial Security*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 13-595.

Assets: these include deposits in financial institutions, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, RRSPs, primary residence, other real estate, vehicles, and equity in business (the amount that would be received if the business were sold and any outstanding debts were paid).

Financial wealth: the stock of assets a family could use relatively quickly to finance consumption — without selling the house, the contents of the house or the business — following a substantial decrease in family income or unexpected expenditures.

| | % of persons in families with no financial wealth | | % of persons in families with no financial wealth and low income | |
|---|---|------|--|------|
| | 1984 | 1999 | 1984 | 1999 |
| | 17 | 19 | 5 | 5 |
| All family units¹ | | | | |
| Family type | | | | |
| Unattached individuals – elderly | 11 | 9 | 8 | 3 |
| Unattached individuals – non elderly | 28 | 30 | 15 | 17 |
| Couples | | | | |
| No children | 14 | 14 | 2 | 2 |
| Children under 18 | 18 | 19 | 4 | 4 |
| Children 18 and over | 9 | 17 | 1 | 1 |
| Elderly couples, no children | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Lone-parent families | 34 | 40 | 21 | 24 |
| Female lone-parent families | 35 | 43 | 22 | 27 |
| Other family types | 17 | 18 | 6 | 4 |
| Characteristics of main income recipient | | | | |
| Age group | | | | |
| 24 or younger, all family types | 27 | 43 | 13 | 23 |
| 24 or younger, families of two or more | 24 | 40 | 10 | 16 |
| 25–34 | 24 | 30 | 6 | 9 |
| 35–44 | 18 | 19 | 4 | 5 |
| 45–54 | 12 | 16 | 3 | 3 |
| 55–64 | 11 | 10 | 3 | 3 |
| 65 or older | 8 | 7 | 4 | 1 |
| Education | | | | |
| Not a university graduate | 18 | 21 | 5 | 6 |
| University graduate | 13 | 13 | 3 | 3 |
| Education by age group | | | | |
| 25–34 | | | | |
| Not a university graduate | 25 | 33 | 7 | 11 |
| University graduate | 18 | 23 | 5 | 5 |
| 35–54 | | | | |
| Not a university graduate | 17 | 20 | 4 | 4 |
| University graduate | 11 | 11 | 1 | 2 |
| Immigration status | | | | |
| Canadian-born | 18 | 20 | 5 | 5 |
| Immigrant residing in Canada | 14 | 18 | 4 | 6 |
| Less than 10 years | 15 | 26 | 7 | 13 |
| 10 years or more | 14 | 14 | 3 | 4 |
| Age group of couples with children under 18 | | | | |
| 25–34 | 24 | 28 | 5 | 6 |
| 35–44 | 17 | 16 | 3 | 3 |
| 45–54 | 12 | 13 | 3 | 2 |
| Aged 25 to 54 with a long-term work disability | | | | |
| Yes | ... | 31 | ... | 13 |
| No | ... | 20 | ... | 4 |

... Not applicable.

1. Family units consist of economic families (a group of two or more persons who live together in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption) and unattached individuals.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Assets and Debts Survey, 1984 and Survey of Financial Security, 1999.

Which families have no financial wealth?

Financial wealth is the stock of assets a family could use relatively quickly to finance consumption — without selling the house, the contents of the house or the business — should they suddenly find themselves faced with a substantial drop in family income or large unanticipated expenditures. Between 1984 and 1999, the percentage of people living in families with no financial wealth increased from 17% to 19%. This small increase, however, masks substantial increases for some family types. In 1999, people living in families whose main income recipient was aged 25 to 54 years of age but had no earner were the most likely to be in families with no financial wealth (44%), closely followed by members of female lone-parent families (43%) and very young families (40%).

Also at a high risk of being in a family with no financial wealth — between one-quarter and one-third of family members in 1999 — were individuals in families whose main income recipient was aged 25 to 34 and had no university degree, whose major income recipient had a work limitation, unattached individuals under 65 years old, couples with children whose major income recipient was aged 25 to 34, and immigrant families who had been living in Canada for less than 10 years.

In contrast, people in elderly families where the major income recipient was aged 65 or over were the least likely to be members of a family with no financial wealth. This is not surprising since older families have had more time and opportunity than their younger counterparts to accumulate savings and equity.

Low-income families with no financial wealth

Low-income families with no financial wealth are more financially vulnerable to adverse events than

other families; in addition to living in straitened circumstances, they also have no financial assets to draw on. Although comprising only a small proportion of the Canadian population in both 1984 and 1999 (5%), important changes occurred during this period. For example, the proportion of elderly unattached individuals having low income and no financial wealth fell from 8% to 3%, mainly due to the falling incidence of low income in this group.¹ In contrast, the proportion of people in very young families having low income and no financial wealth rose from 10% to 16%, and from 22% to 27% in female lone-parent families.

Of all individuals in families with no financial wealth, approximately 30% in both 1984 and 1999 belonged to families whose after-tax income was below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-offs. In 1999, for families with no financial wealth, the chances of living in low income were greatest for members of female lone-parent families, very young families, families of recent immigrants and non-elderly unattached individuals. The chances of being in low income were fairly low for non-elderly couples, whether they had children or not.

While very young families are relatively vulnerable, it is likely that their earnings will increase with more labour market experience, meaning that many of them will be in straitened circumstances for a relatively short time. This may not be true, however, for female lone-parent families. Previous research has shown that lone-parent families are by far the most likely to suffer persistent low income.² This severely limits their ability to build up savings and increase their financial wealth. The absence of a second earner poses a severe problem for these families where the parent, most often a woman, may be constrained to choose a job with shorter hours or located close to schools. Taken together, these findings

| | % of persons in low income among families with no financial wealth | |
|---|--|-----------|
| | 1984 | 1999 |
| All family units¹ | 29 | 28 |
| Family type | | |
| Unattached individuals – elderly | 76 | 39 |
| Unattached individuals – non elderly | 53 | 56 |
| Couples | | |
| No children | 13 | 13 |
| Children under 18 | 21 | 19 |
| Lone-parent families | 60 | 60 |
| Female lone-parent families | 62 | 63 |
| Characteristics of main income recipient | | |
| Age group | | |
| 24 or younger, all family types | 50 | 53 |
| 24 or younger, families of two or more | 42 | 39 |
| 25–34 | 26 | 31 |
| 35–44 | 21 | 26 |
| 45–54 | 26 | 16 |
| 55–64 | 30 | 31 |
| 65 or older | 50 | 19 |
| Education | | |
| Not a university graduate | 30 | 29 |
| University graduate | 20 | 23 |
| Education by age group | | |
| 25–34 | | |
| Not a university graduate | 26 | 33 |
| University graduate | 26 | 22 |
| 35–54 | | |
| Not a university graduate | 24 | 22 |
| University graduate | 12 | 22 |
| Immigration status | | |
| Canadian-born | 29 | 26 |
| Immigrant residing in Canada | 30 | 35 |
| Less than 10 years | 48 | 49 |
| 10 years or more | 25 | 26 |

1. Family units consist of economic families (a group of two or more persons who live together in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption) and unattached individuals.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Assets and Debts Survey, 1984 and Survey of Financial Security, 1999.

- The drop likely reflects enhancements to Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement and Provincial Income Supplements which took place during the period and led to a substantial reduction of low-income rates among the elderly.
- Morissette, R. and X. Zhang. Summer 2001. "Experiencing low income for several years." *Perspectives on Labour and Income* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-001-XPE) 13, 2: 25-35.

Some families may have no financial wealth but earn substantial income and, therefore, may not be financially vulnerable. For example, many young families with children may have had little time to accumulate savings since their major income recipient entered the labour market full-time. This is likely to be true especially at the end of the 1990s because young people at that time stayed in school longer than their counterparts in the mid-1980s before holding their first full-time job. Also, some families earning substantial income may have decided to make high consumption expenditures and, as a

result, may have chosen to accumulate little or no financial assets for a significant period. Some other families may have had to sell all their financial assets in the past to face income interruptions occasioned by a permanent layoff or unexpected expenditures such as major repairs on the house. Still other families may have opted to put their savings into their home.¹

1. Of all persons living in families with no financial wealth in 1984 (1999), 51% (44%) belonged to families who owned a principal residence. The corresponding percentages for persons living in families with positive financial wealth are 72% (75%).

suggest that the high financial vulnerability of many lone-parent families may be more than a temporary state.

Low-income families with modest amounts of financial wealth

While 5% of Canadians lived in low-income families with no financial wealth in 1999, an additional 5% were in low-income families with modest amounts of financial wealth. "Modest amounts" means these families would have remained in a low-income situation even if they had liquidated all their financial assets in an attempt to improve their after-tax income. Using this yardstick (low income and no or little financial wealth), the percentage of individuals in financially vulnerable families remained virtually unchanged at 10% in both 1984 and 1999.

Once again, elderly unattached individuals became less financially exposed to adverse events during the period, while the opposite was true for families of recent immigrants. In 1999, the chances of being in a family with low income and modest amounts of financial wealth were four times higher than the national average for members of female lone-parent families and seven times

higher for those in prime-aged families³ with no earner. In contrast, the chances were only 4% for persons living in families with an elderly major income recipient and only 5% for those families where the main earner was a university graduate aged 35 to 54.

The distribution of wealth of low-income families

While many would agree that financial wealth is a good indicator of financial vulnerability, most previous studies looking at Canadian families who struggle financially or live in straitened circumstances used data on low income. To what extent do low-income families also have low financial wealth? In 1999, the "typical" low-income family had a \$300 "cushion" to buffer income interruptions or deal with unexpected expenditures. This is negligible compared to the median of \$21,500 that was available to families not in low-income. Both in 1984 and 1999, 75% of low-income families had less than \$5,900 in potentially liquid assets to help them face adverse events. Others were more fortunate — 10% of low-income families had \$32,000 or more.⁴

How did the financial vulnerability of low-income families change during

this period? Between 1984 and 1999 the percentage of low-income families with no financial wealth rose from 35% to 40%. At the same time, the average financial wealth of low-income families in the bottom three quartiles of the financial wealth distribution dropped by about \$800 (in 1999 constant dollars). Many low-income families of the late 1990s were no better off than their counterparts in the mid-1980s, neither being closer to the low-income cutoffs nor having more financial assets.⁵

The financial vulnerability of the unemployed

One would expect families who have experienced unemployment in the

3. Prime-aged families are those in which the main income recipient is aged 24 to 54.

4. For low-income families without businesses, the corresponding amount is \$19,600.

5. However, the opposite is true for the 10% richest low-income families: financial wealth rose at the 90th percentile. As a result, the proportion of low-income families with financial wealth of \$50,000 or more rose from 4% in 1984 to 7% in 1999.

recent past to be more financially vulnerable than families whose major breadwinner has been steadily employed. First, workers who suffer from unemployment are generally less educated and have a lower earnings potential and, therefore, are less able to accumulate substantial savings. Second, unemployment may force a family to liquidate some of its financial assets, thereby reducing financial wealth in subsequent periods.

The data confirm this view. In 1999, more than 30% of all individuals living in families whose major income recipient had been unemployed for some time during the preceding year belonged to families with no financial wealth. This proportion is twice as high as that of individuals living in families whose major income recipient had been working full year, full-time.

Furthermore, low-income rates were roughly 10 times higher among families with substantial unemployment (six to 12 months of unemployment) than among those with no unemployment. The implication is obvious: of all individuals living in families whose major income recipient had worked full year full-time, almost none were financially vulnerable. In contrast, of all individuals living in families whose major income recipient was unemployed for at least six months in 1998, one-fifth belonged to low-income families with no financial wealth and fully one-third belonged to low-income families with modest amounts of financial wealth.

Summary

The percentage of individuals living in families with low income and little financial wealth remained virtually constant between 1984 and 1999. Nevertheless, some groups became more financially vulnerable to income interruptions and unexpected expenditures while others improved their economic position. Although the

financial wealth of other families rose substantially between 1984 and 1999, the median financial wealth of low-income families did not increase; therefore, the wealth gap between low-income families and other families rose during the period. Compared to their counterparts in the mid-1980s, the vast majority of low-income families at the end of the 1990s had no more savings with which to protect themselves against adverse events.

Of all families, female lone-parent families were by far the most likely to suffer persistent low income. The most financially vulnerable families were prime-aged families with no earner. The lack of a decline in the percentage of persons living in families with no financial wealth is somewhat surprising since the Canadian population was older at the end of the 1990s than during the mid-1980s and thus, had more time to accumulative savings. Other factors that may have played an offsetting role in this phenomenon include: the growing importance of lone-parent families and unattached individuals, the increase in the length of time young people stay in school before entering the labour market, the decline in real earnings of young men, and easier access to credit. These factors may have restricted some families' savings, increased their indebtedness, or both, thereby reducing their financial wealth.



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Unmet health care needs

by J. Chen, F. Hou, C. Sanmartin, C. Houle, S. Tremblay and J.M. Berthelot

This article was adapted from "Unmet needs for health care," and "Changes in unmet health care needs" published, respectively, in the January 2002 and March 2002 issues of *Health Reports* 13, 2 and 13, 3 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003).

It is said that one of Canada's most cherished accomplishments is its universal health care system, established to ensure reasonable access to health services for all Canadians. While the system has worked well for many years, people are now expressing some concerns about it. In 1999 over 80% of Canadians were satisfied that the health care system could meet their own and their family's needs; however, only 62% felt that it could adequately meet the needs of all residents in their province.¹ In addition, according to public opinion polls, the proportion of people who thought that health care should be the government's top priority grew from 30% to 55% between July 1998 and January 2000, reflecting increased concern about the state of the health care system.² In the meantime, the proportion of Canadians reporting that they did not receive the health care they thought they needed increased substantially.

1. Canadian Institute for Health Information. 2001. *National Health Expenditure Trends, 1975–2000*. Ottawa: Canadian Institute for Health Information.

2. ibid.

CST What you should know about this study

Data for the years 1994–95, 1996–97 and 1998–99 come from the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) and for 2000–01 from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS).

The NPHS interviewed Canadians aged 12 or older: over 17,000 in 1994–95, over 73,000 in 1996–97 and over 15,000 in 1998–99. CCHS data were provided by nearly 56,000 respondents aged 12 or older. Information on unmet needs from both surveys is based on self-reported experiences and so is open to interpretation. Respondents may interpret an unmet need as a situation in which they did not receive care for a health problem, or when they received care, but not at the time they felt they needed it. The validity of the data was not checked against clinical or other sources.

Unmet health care needs: The NPHS and CCHS measure self-reported unmet health care needs by asking, "During the past 12 months, was there ever a time when you felt that you needed health care but you didn't receive it?" A "yes" response was tabulated as an unmet need. This question was followed by, "Thinking of the most recent time, why didn't you get care?" and then "Again, thinking of the most recent time, what was the type of care that was needed?" Major response categories were established and the data tabulated.

Because of the wording of the question addressing unmet needs, it is not possible to distinguish situations in which people did not receive services at all from those situations in which they did not receive them in a timely manner.

Access to health care is a dynamic process that involves the person seeking care, the system providing care, and the various factors that facilitate or impede this exchange. People may, therefore, not receive the care they need due to diverse circumstances ranging from the health care delivery system itself to the cost of services to their own personal circumstances and attitudes.

Based on data from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), and the National Population Health Survey (NPHS), this article focuses on the change in unmet health care needs reported by Canadians between 1998 and 2001. It describes the factors that contribute to unmet needs and explores their relationship to selected socio-demographic characteristics.

Unmet health care needs on the rise

According to the NPHS, the proportion of people aged 12 or older reporting they did not receive the health care they needed rose slightly but steadily from 4% in 1994–95 to 6% in 1998–99. Between 1998–99 and 2000–01, however, the proportion nearly doubled to reach 13%, or 3.2 million individuals. Men and women of all ages reported substantial increases in unmet health care needs.

The main reason for this increase was the large growth in the percentage of Canadians who said they had to wait a long time to get a health care appointment or treatment: the proportion grew from 23% to 30% between 1998–99 and 2000–01. However, it is difficult to determine if actual waiting times did, in fact, increase during these years or if it was only perceived waiting times that changed. According to provincial reports, the elapsed time between making an appointment and seeing the doctor lengthened in some cases, but remained relatively stable in others.

On the other hand, the percentage of individuals who claimed that their health care needs were not met because service was unavailable when or where they needed it stayed virtually the same, at around 21%. In addition, a declining proportion of Canadians attributed their unmet health needs to personal circumstances; for example, the percentage of respondents who did "not get around to it" or were "too busy" fell by several percentage points between 1998–99 and 2000–01. And the share of Canadians who said that they did not seek out care because they felt that "it would be inadequate"

dropped from 13% to 5%. Other reasons for ignoring health needs, such as fear or dislike of doctors, not knowing where to go, and cost and transportation problems, did not significantly change.

People with health problems more likely to complain of long waiting times³

Health care needs that are not met because of lengthy waiting times or the

3. From this section on, the population covered consists of those 18 years and older, unless otherwise indicated.



| Reason why health needs not met | Population aged 12 or older reporting unmet health care needs | |
|--|---|---------|
| | 1998–99 | 2000–01 |
| | % | |
| Health care delivery | | |
| Waiting time too long | 23 | 30 |
| Service not available when needed | 15 | 14 |
| Service not available in area | 7 | 7 |
| Cost and transportation | | |
| Cost | 11 | 9 |
| Transportation | 2 ¹ | 2 |
| Personal circumstances | | |
| Did not get around to it/didn't bother | 14 | 11 |
| Too busy | 14 | 10 |
| Felt care inadequate | 13 | 5 |
| Decided not to seek care | 5 | 7 |
| Did not know where to go | 4 ¹ | 3 |
| Dislikes or is afraid of doctors | 2 ¹ | 3 |
| Personal or family responsibility | -- | 1 |
| Other | 7 | 19 |

-- Sample too small to provide reliable estimate.

1. High sampling variability.

Note: Because multiple responses were allowed, percentages do not total 100%.

Sources: Statistics Canada, National Population Health Survey, 1998–99 and Canadian Community Health Survey, September 2000 to February 2001.

unavailability of service reflect people's perceived deficiencies in health care delivery. This situation may have been exacerbated in recent years by budget cuts and system reforms, which may

place a particular burden on less advantaged groups in society. However, based on analysis of NPHS respondents aged 18 or older, the prevalence of unmet health care needs resulting

from inadequate health care delivery did not vary significantly, after taking account of other factors by household income, education, employment, Aboriginal status, immigrant status, age, marital status or place of residence (urban or rural).

Long wait times and the unavailability of service when and where it was needed were, however, strongly associated with an individual's health. Since people with medical problems are most in need of health care services, they are more likely than others to recognize deficiencies in the delivery of those services, particularly if their health problems remain unsolved.

For example, in 1998–99, 7% of people aged 18 or older in poor or fair health reported unmet needs related to health care delivery, compared with just 2% of people in better health. Similarly, individuals with chronic conditions, chronic pain or distress were more likely to report problems with the health care delivery system. Even when the effects of other factors were taken into account, poor or fair health, chronic conditions, and distress were associated with this type of unmet need; however, chronic pain was no longer a significant predictor of having unmet health care needs.

Compared with people who had not consulted a general practitioner or a specialist in the previous year, Canadians who had were more likely to report unmet needs due to long waiting times or service availability. Of course, physician consultations are linked to many other factors that might affect someone's health care needs, notably health status. Yet even when other factors were held constant, consultation with a general practitioner or specialist significantly increased the odds of reporting that needs went unanswered because of problems with waiting times or service availability.



Canadians in poor health were more likely to report long waiting times and the unavailability of services

| | Population aged 18 or older reporting problems with health care delivery | Odds ratio ¹ |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| | '000 | % |
| Total | 588 | 3 |
| <i>Men</i> | 229 | 2 |
| <i>Women</i> | 358 | 3 |
| Self-reported health | | |
| <i>Poor/fair</i> | 149 | 7 |
| <i>Good/very good/excellent</i> | 439 | 2 |
| Chronic condition | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 470 | 3 |
| <i>No</i> | 117 | 1 |
| Chronic pain | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 187 | 6 |
| <i>No</i> | 400 | 2 |
| Distress | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 146 | 6 |
| <i>No</i> | 441 | 2 |
| General practitioner consultation in past year | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 545 | 3 |
| <i>No</i> | 43 | 1 |
| Specialist consultation in past year | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 316 | 5 |
| <i>No</i> | 272 | 2 |
| Doctor's authority score | | |
| <i>High</i> | 72 | 2 |
| <i>Middle</i> | 413 | 3 |
| <i>Low</i> | 103 | 4 |
| Self-care score | | |
| <i>High</i> | 142 | 2 |
| <i>Middle</i> | 273 | 3 |
| <i>Low</i> | 173 | 3 |

* Significantly different from reference group at the 95% confidence level.

1. Presents the odds of individuals with particular characteristics reporting problems with health care delivery relative to the odds of a benchmark group when all other variables in the model are held constant.

Note: Italics denote reference groups.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Population Health Survey, 1998–99.

ERRATA

Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-008-XPE
Canadian Social Trends, Winter 2002

See the “Health Services Access Survey” box on page 21. The first two sentences of the third paragraph should read:

Just over 5% of Canadians who reported needing to see a specialist or to take a diagnostic test had waited 26 weeks or more before receiving these services. Similarly, close to 10% of those who reported needing non-emergency surgery had waited 26 weeks or more and 5% had waited for 35 weeks or longer, but the waiting time varied by type of surgery.

On July 15, 2002 the first results of the Health Services Access Survey were released. The survey, developed by Statistics Canada, was partly funded by Health Canada and the provinces of Prince Edward Island, Alberta and British Columbia. Among other topics, the survey collected information on the difficulties reported by Canadians in accessing health care. Following are some selected results.

Some 18% (just under 4.3 million) of Canadians who needed routine care, health information and immediate care for a minor health problem encountered a difficulty of some kind. So did 23% (about 1.4 million) of those requiring specialist visits, non-emergency surgery and diagnostic tests. While the type of difficulty varied by type of service, long waits topped the list.

Just over 5% of Canadians waited 26 weeks or more for specialist visits and diagnostic tests. For

non-emergency surgery, close to 10% reported waiting for 26 weeks and about 5% for 35 weeks or more, but the waiting time varied by type of surgery. People who needed cardiac or cancer related surgery were more likely to receive services within one month (54%) than those requiring a joint replacement or cataract surgery (20%).

Nearly one in five (18% or 900,000) people who visited a specialist reported that waiting affected their lives. The majority (59%) reported worry, anxiety or stress. About 37% said they experienced pain. The situation was similar among individuals waiting for a diagnostic test. Over 20% of those who waited for specialized services felt the length of time was unacceptable.

For more information, see *The Daily*, Monday, July 15, 2002, www.statcan.ca.

A related factor is attitudes toward physicians. People with a high level of trust in doctors were less likely than those with a low level to report that their unmet health care needs stemmed from waiting times or service availability. Even when other factors including health status and physician consultations were considered, a strong tendency to trust doctors was associated with low odds of reporting unmet needs of this kind.

Income affects unmet health needs stemming from cost or transportation difficulties

In 1998–99, slightly less than 1% of Canadians aged 18 or older (about 200,000 people) reported that they had not received the care they needed because of problems related to cost or transportation. The odds of having unmet health care needs due to these reasons were high for people reporting chronic conditions, chronic pain and distress.

Not surprisingly, having cost or transportation difficulties was also related to household income. In 1998–99, over 3% of residents in low-income households reported unmet health care needs due to these concerns, compared with only 0.3% of people in upper-middle and high-income households. Even when other factors were held constant, the odds that low-income households would report these difficulties were about 10 times higher than the odds for upper-middle and high-income households.

These results are consistent with a recent Canadian study in which low-income people, especially the working poor, said their main reason for not obtaining physician services was they believed they would be unable to afford prescribed medications. The same study also showed that lack of transportation was one reason why social assistance recipients did not see a physician.⁴

Personal circumstances and attitudes account for most unmet needs

In 1998–99, over half of individuals aged 18 or older with unmet health care needs (53%) stated that they had not pursued getting health care because they were too busy, decided not to bother, believed that care would be inadequate, did not know where to go, or disliked or feared doctors. Young people were most likely to voice these problems. Even when other factors like health status were taken into account, 18- to 34-year-olds still had significantly higher odds of reporting unmet health care needs due to personal reasons than did people aged 65 or older. Perhaps younger people's busier schedules, and different

4. Williamson, D.L. and J.E. Fast. 1998. "Poverty and medical treatment: When public policy compromises accessibility." *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 89, 2: 120-124.

attitudes toward and knowledge about health care may explain some of these disparities.

A person's attitude toward health care was, in fact, an important factor in predicting unmet health care needs. The more respondents trusted doctors' authority, the lower the prevalence of unmet needs related to personal circumstances. Even when other factors were taken into account, high regard for physician authority lowered the odds of having unmet health care needs for these reasons. Conversely, a strong tendency to rely on self-care raised the odds.

Almost 9% of people in poor or fair health had unmet needs due to personal circumstances, compared with 3% whose health was good to excellent. When taking other factors into account, the odds of reporting unmet needs due to personal circumstances were significantly higher for people in poor or fair health.

Aboriginal people living off-reserve had a higher prevalence of unmet needs due to personal circumstances and attitudes than did non-Aboriginal people: 8% versus 3%. The relationship still held when the effects of factors such as household income and health status were considered.

But although it appeared that people in low-income households were also more likely to have unmet health care needs stemming from personal circumstances than people in upper-middle and high-income households, when other factors were taken into account, the difference was not statistically significant. Similarly, the effects of education, place of residence (urban or rural) and immigrant status were not statistically significant when other characteristics were considered.

Women more likely than men to report unmet health care needs

Women were more likely than men to report that their health needs were not

met due to waiting times, service availability (when and where required) and personal circumstances.

The gender gap in unmet needs related to service availability persisted when demographic and socio-economic characteristics were controlled for. However, when health status was taken into account, the difference between the sexes was no longer statistically significant. Health status, it appears, was a key factor linking gender with availability-related unmet needs, since women's self-perceived health tended to be poorer than men's.

The gender difference in having unmet health care needs related to personal circumstance and attitudes was statistically significant when the selected demographic and socio-economic factors were controlled for. But when attitudes toward doctors' authority and self-care were taken into account, the gap between men and women disappeared. Such beliefs may act as mediators linking gender with personal and attitude-related unmet health care needs.

Summary

In 2000–01, one in eight people aged 12 or older reported that they had had health care needs that were not met, up from 1 in every 24 people in 1994–95 and nearly double the rate from 1998–99. Waiting for health care services was the leading reason offered by people reporting unmet needs, and the number of people citing this reason rose substantially between 1998–99 and 2000–01.

In 1998–99, among respondents aged 18 or older, the factors associated with different types of unmet needs tended to vary. Just two factors — chronic conditions and distress — were significantly related to all three types: health care delivery, cost and transportation, and personal circumstances and attitudes. Other measures of health status and physician consultations were associated with unmet

needs related to service availability and personal circumstances and attitudes. People who trusted doctors had relatively low odds of reporting unmet needs due to service availability or personal circumstances. It is not clear if this was because such people were less skeptical about health care services or because they had had positive experiences when receiving health care in the past.⁵

5. Ross, C.E. and R.S. Duff. 1982. "Returning to the doctors: The effect of client characteristics, type of practice, and experience with care." *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour* 23: 119–131.



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I still feel overqualified for my job

by Susan Crompton

Many agree that education is important for both individual well-being and economic prosperity. To survive in today's knowledge-based economy, people must be well educated and willing to continually update their skills. Indeed, over the last 25 years, the percentage of the adult population with a university degree has more than doubled. Yet, many highly educated people, particularly if they are young, feel overqualified for their job.

Overqualification concerns both workers and employers because people who hold jobs that make few demands on their skills have lower earnings and lower levels of productivity.¹ Overqualified workers may be less satisfied and more frustrated with their jobs, be absent more frequently and be more likely to quit.² This article uses the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) to revisit the issue of job overqualification at the zenith of an economic expansion, focusing on workers aged 20 to 64 with postsecondary qualifications. (An earlier study, using similar concepts, looked at overqualification in 1994, a time when Canadians were coming out of the recession of the early 1990s.³)

While other studies have examined the mismatch between the education requirements of jobs and the qualifications of workers in those jobs, this study includes two other situations that can lead to people feeling

overqualified. The first occurs when the education and/or experience of the worker match the *stated* requirements of the employer, but the *actual* skills needed to do the job are lower. The second arises when the worker's education and experience match both the employer's stated and the job's actual skill requirements, but the worker is not happy because of other reasons such as wages, erratic employment or terms of employment.

Slightly more people feel overqualified in 2000 than in 1994

In 2000, almost 5.7 million employed Canadians aged 20 to 64 had a university or college degree, certificate or diploma. Some 25% of them — nearly 1.4 million — felt overqualified, compared with 22% in 1994. The percentage of postsecondary workers who felt overqualified increased despite solid gains in the economy and an aging work force, two factors that usually contribute to decreasing

overqualification rates.⁴ Furthermore, those who felt overqualified in 2000 did so regardless of whether they held degrees at the doctorate, master's or bachelor's level or a college diploma. In contrast, in 1994, workers with master's, doctoral or first professional degrees (27%) were more likely than those with college credentials (21%) to feel they were overqualified for their job.

In 2000, equal percentages of men and women felt overqualified (25%) compared with 26% of women and 20% of men in 1994. While there was little change in the percentage of women postsecondary workers feeling overqualified, men — particularly young men — were more likely to feel this way in 2000.

Young workers may have more reasons to feel overqualified

In 2000, young workers aged 20 to 29 with postsecondary credentials were more likely to feel overqualified for

1. Frenette, M. Spring 2001. "Overqualified? Recent graduates, employer needs." *Perspectives on Labour and Income* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-001-XPE) 13, 1: 45-53.
2. Hersch, J. 1991. "Education match and job match." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 75, 1: 140-145; Feldman, D. 1996. "The nature, antecedents and consequences of underemployment." *Journal of Management* 22, 3: 395-396.
3. Kelly, K., L. Howatson-Leo and W. Clark. Winter 1997. "I feel overqualified for my job..." *Canadian Social Trends*. p.11-16.
4. Low unemployment rates and high GDP growth rates reflected the robust economic growth in 1999–2000. In 2000, the unemployment rate for 25- to 54-year-olds with a postsecondary certificate or diploma or university degree reached a 10-year low of 4.5% compared with 7.3% in 1994.

The 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) surveyed about 25,000 respondents in private households in the 10 provinces. Respondents self-identified themselves as overqualified for their job by responding to the question: "Considering your experience, education and training, do you feel that you are overqualified for your job?"

This study examines individuals aged 20 to 64 with a postsecondary qualification whose main activity during the previous 12 months was working at a paid job or business. Postsecondary qualifications include earned doctoral, master's, bachelor's and first professional degrees; graduate and undergraduate university certificates and diplomas; and community college/CEGEP certificates and diplomas, and postsecondary level certificates and diplomas from similar institutions. Excluded are trade/vocational certificates and diplomas. "Postsecondary workers" or "highly educated workers" are terms used throughout the text to refer to this group. About 5,500 responses representing a

population of 5.7 million postsecondary workers were included in this study.

The original 1994 data published in 1997 referred to the population with postsecondary qualifications who had a job the week before they were surveyed. This differs slightly from the population covered for overqualification in 2000. The 1994 numbers presented in this study have been recalculated to cover the same population as the 2000 data.

Work stress score: The number of areas in people's work environment that caused them excess worry or stress in the past 12 months. The score ranges from a low of 0 to a maximum of 8, counting the number of "yes" responses to the following statements: 1) too many demands or too many hours; 2) risk of accident or injury; 3) poor interpersonal relations; 4) threat of layoff or job loss; 5) having to learn new computer skills; 6) financial concerns; 7) not enough working hours; 8) anything else.

their jobs (33%) than their counterparts aged 30 to 64 (23%). Several reasons may account for this phenomenon. First, labour market researchers suggest that over-educated workers have less work experience than those whose schooling matches the job's educational requirements. As such, they may accept work that is not commensurate with their education, skills or knowledge in the hope that, once they have more experience, they will progress to higher level jobs.⁵

Second, younger workers are still finding their way in the labour market, trying out different employers, sometimes landing jobs that are not what they had expected. Over time, workers may become more skilled at finding the "right" job for them, and thus become less likely to feel overqualified.

Finally, when young graduates first start working, they may be very achievement-oriented. The most important aspects of their job are

factors like the intellectual challenge, the opportunity for promotion and having responsibility and authority. Given these expectations, some young people may be disappointed by the reality of their first few years in the workforce. After some years of experience, however, other factors related to quality of life — like time, benefits and family — become increasingly important and may change their view of their job.⁶

Postsecondary graduates more likely to feel overqualified in blue-collar jobs

Feeling overqualified seems to be associated with a mismatch between the education and experience of the worker and the skill requirements of the job. Those who work in jobs closely related to their studies were much less likely to feel overqualified than workers in unrelated jobs. Because postsecondary education trains people for management, professional or semi-professional

jobs, those who work in these types of jobs are less likely to feel overqualified than postsecondary graduates who work in blue-collar or clerical, sales and services jobs.

On the other hand, some studies conducted in the 1990s have suggested that people with higher educational qualifications than their jobs require may have lower levels of cognitive skills than their peers in appropriately matched jobs.⁷ They may still consider themselves overqualified because they have the same expectations of a good

5. Boothby. 2002. *Literacy Skills, Occupational Assignment and the Returns to Over- and Under-education* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-552-MPE, no. 9. Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada). Ottawa: Minister of Industry. p. 11.
6. Kelly, Howatson-Leo and Clark. 1997. p. 15.
7. Boothby. 2002. p. 11.

| | 1994 % who feel overqualified for their job | 2000 |
|---|--|-----------|
| Total | 22 | 25 |
| Sex | | |
| Men | 20 | 25 |
| Women | 26 | 25 |
| Level of degree, certificate or diploma | | |
| College | 21 | 25 |
| Bachelor's or undergraduate | 23 | 25 |
| Doctorate, master's, first professional or other graduate | 27 | 25 |
| Age | | |
| 20-29 | 30 | 33 |
| 30-34 | 26 | 26 |
| 35-44 | 19 | 24 |
| 45-54 | 20 | 21 |
| 55-64 | 18 | 18 |
| Men | | |
| 20-29 | 25 | 35 |
| 30-44 | 20 | 26 |
| 45-64 | 17 | 20 |
| Women | | |
| 20-29 | 34 | 31 |
| 30-44 | 23 | 24 |
| 45-64 | 23 | 21 |
| Provinces | | |
| Atlantic Canada | 18 | 23 |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | -- | 15 |
| Prince Edward Island | -- | 27 |
| Nova Scotia | -- | 27 |
| New Brunswick | -- | 23 |
| Quebec | 18 | 21 |
| Ontario | 26 | 27 |
| Prairies | 18 | 22 |
| Manitoba | -- | 22 |
| Saskatchewan | -- | 17 |
| Alberta | 19 | 24 |
| British Columbia | 30 | 31 |

-- Sample too small to provide reliable estimate.

Note: Includes people aged 20 to 64 with a postsecondary degree, certificate or diploma whose main activity during the previous 12 months was working.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

job as their peers, but they don't recognize their lower cognitive skills.

Changes in work environments may also contribute to how challenging workers feel their job is. According to the 2000 GSS, about one in four highly educated workers said their jobs had been hardly or not at all affected by the introduction of computers and automated technology over the past five years, while one in two reported that their jobs were greatly affected. Individuals whose jobs had been hardly or not at all affected were much more likely to feel overqualified (31%) than those whose jobs were greatly affected (22%) by automation. Not surprisingly, blue-collar and sales and services jobs were least affected by the introduction of automation or computers over the last five years — 41% of postsecondary workers in these types of jobs reported hardly any or no such change to their work.

Feeling overqualified also appears to be associated with having more job stress, less job security and lower earnings. According to the 2000 GSS, about 13% of postsecondary workers had a work stress score of three or higher and 9% felt it was very or somewhat likely that they would be laid off in the next year. While overall 25% of postsecondary workers felt overqualified, about one-third of those with a work stress score of three or higher, and 39% of those who thought they would be laid off in the next year, felt overqualified. Furthermore, management and professional workers were significantly more likely to feel overqualified if they had a work stress score of three or more, or if they thought they were very likely to be laid off, even though people in these occupations are typically less likely than others to feel overqualified.

Income is also a key indicator of overqualification: the lower the personal income, the greater the likelihood that a worker feels overqualified.

| | Postsecondary workers | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | All | Feel overqualified |
| | | % |
| Total | 100 | 25 |
| Occupation | 100 | |
| Manager/professional | 48 | 16 |
| Clerical/sales/service | 30 | 36* |
| Blue collar | 11 | 36* |
| Technologists, technicians and technical | 10 | 23* |
| Type of work | 100 | |
| Full-year, full-time ¹ | 81 | 23 |
| Part-year, full-time | 10 | 36* |
| Full-year, part-time | 6 | 32* |
| Other | 2 | 30 |
| Self-employed or employee | 100 | |
| Employee | 83 | 26 |
| Self-employed with no employees | 10 | 21* |
| Self-employed with employees | 7 | 14* |
| Level of stress in the work environment | 100 | |
| (possible scores: 0–8) | | |
| 0 | 37 | 23 |
| 1 | 31 | 22 |
| 2 | 19 | 27* |
| 3 or higher | 13 | 34* |
| How likely do you think you are to lose your job or be laid off in the next year? | 100 | |
| Very unlikely | 80 | 23 |
| Somewhat unlikely | 11 | 27 |
| Somewhat likely | 5 | 33* |
| Very likely | 4 | 45* |
| In the past five years, how much has your work been affected by the introduction of computers or automated technology? | 100 | |
| Greatly | 52 | 22 |
| Somewhat | 22 | 24 |
| Hardly/not at all | 26 | 31* |
| Annual personal income | 100 | |
| Less than \$40,000 | 33 | 35 |
| \$40,000–\$79,999 | 32 | 18* |
| \$80,000 and over | 9 | 11* |
| Don't know/not reported | 25 | 26* |
| Relationship between job and education | 100 | |
| Closely related | 61 | 16 |
| Somewhat related | 18 | 30* |
| Not related | 22 | 45* |

* Statistically significant difference between this characteristic and that of the reference group in italics at the 90% confidence level.

1. Worked mostly 30 hours or more per week for 49 to 52 weeks in the reference year.

Note: Includes people aged 20 to 64 with a postsecondary degree, certificate or diploma whose main activity during the previous 12 months was working.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2000.

Generally, a mismatch between job and education has a negative effect on the earnings of postsecondary workers. A 2002 Canadian report confirms the conclusions of earlier studies showing that "earnings depend crucially on the match between schooling and occupation, not on schooling alone."⁸ As a result, low-paying clerical, sales and service or blue-collar jobs are the ones that postsecondary graduates are most likely to feel overqualified for.

Summary

Overqualification has a psychological dimension. Subjective indicators of overqualification, such as the self-reporting surveys used in this article, capture workers' perceptions of loss of opportunity.

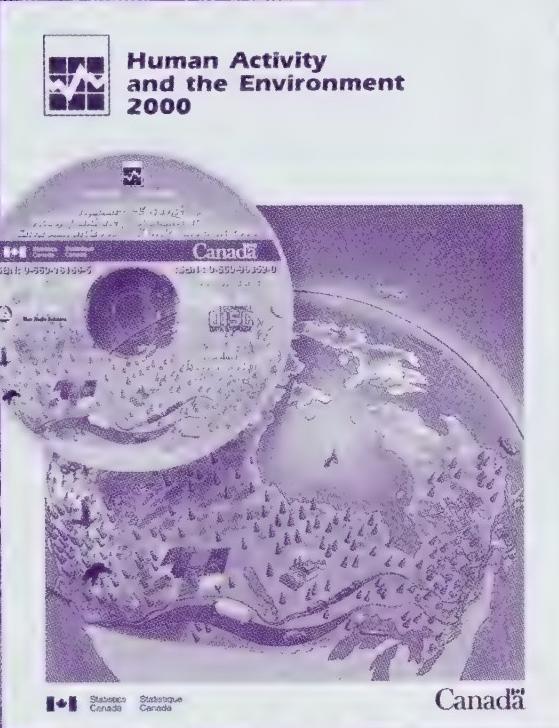
The percentage of postsecondary workers who felt overqualified increased slightly between 1994 and 2000. Young people remain the group most likely to feel so. Postsecondary workers in blue-collar or clerical, sales and services jobs, as well as those who experienced high job stress or felt they were likely to be laid off, also had overqualification rates above the average.

8. Boothby. 2002. p. 28.



Susan Crompton is Editor-in-Chief of *Canadian Social Trends*.

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Obesity increasing fast among baby boom men

From 1994–95 to 2000–01, the number of obese Canadians aged 20 to 64 grew by 24% to reach 2.8 million people, about 15% of the adult population, or one out of every seven people.

Men accounted for two-thirds of the increase. In 2000–01, an estimated 1.5 million men were considered obese, up 32% from 1994–95. In contrast, the number of obese women rose 15% to 1.3 million. Obesity is on the rise for all groups except women aged 20 to 34, among whom it fell 9% during the six-year period. Increases were greatest among men and women aged 45 to 54, who accounted for one-fourth of all obese adults in Canada. Rates of obesity increase with age, and were highest in the 55 to 64 age group (19%), and slightly lower in the 45 to 54 age group (18%).

The Daily
May 8, 2002
Catalogue no. 11-001-XIE



Computer technologies

Companies that invest heavily in technology generally have employees who are more highly educated than workers in other businesses. The link between education and computer

technologies is strongest at the highest levels of educational attainment and computer investments. Individuals with at least a university degree were more likely to work in companies that spent over \$2,500 per employee to implement innovations in hardware or software. Moreover, recently hired workers of these companies are even more educated than their longer-tenured colleagues.

About 23% of computer users cited employer-provided formal training as the most important method in learning their main, work-related computer application. However, far more employees mentioned self-training (45%) or informal training from co-workers or supervisors (44%) as their most important learning method.

**Working Smarter:
The Skill Bias of Computer
Technologies, 1999**
Catalogue no. 71-584-MIE, no. 3



Food consumption

Canadians are including more cereal products, low-fat milk and cream in their diets. Eating more pasta, bakery products and cereal-based snacks resulted in the consumption of grain-based products reaching 89 kilograms per person in 2001, up from 72 kilograms a decade ago.

In 2001, each Canadian drank almost 87 litres of milk, 8% less than a decade ago. Higher fat milk consumption has fallen by

just over 25% during the past decade, as 1% and skim milk continue to grab larger market shares. At the same time, Canadians are increasingly turning to cream, consuming 7 litres per person in 2001, up by 2 litres per person from a decade ago. They have also increased their consumption of poultry, a naturally leaner meat, along with leaner cuts of beef and pork.

**Food Consumption in Canada,
Part I**
Catalogue no. 32-229-XIB



Does firm size matter?

Roughly 29% of all firms had their own Web site in 2001, up slightly from 26% the year before. Large firms continue to dominate the Internet market. About 74% of large firms had a Web site in 2001, compared with 57% of medium-sized firms and only 24% of small firms.

Differences in firm size were also apparent for selling and purchasing online. The proportion of firms selling online remains low, dropping from 10% in 1999 to 7% in 2001. However, the dollar amount of online sales has been steadily increasing — from \$4.2 billion in 1999 to \$10.4 billion in 2001. The information and cultural industries, as well as the educational sector, were clear leaders in both Internet use and Web site ownership, regardless of firm size.

**Embracing E-Business:
Does Size Matter?**
Catalogue no. 56F004MIE



Distance to school and university participation

High school students living within commuting distance of a university (less than 40 km away) were almost twice as likely to pursue a university education as those living beyond commuting distance (more than 80 km away). This was the case even after differences in family income, parental education, gender and province were taken into account. One in five Canadians live beyond commuting distance of a university.

Students from families with lower income are the most negatively affected by distance. Among students from families in the lower income tier, those living within commuting distance were 4.4 times more likely to attend university than those living beyond commuting distance. In contrast, students from families in the upper income tier who lived within commuting distance were only 1.4 times as likely to attend university as their counterparts who lived beyond commuting distance.

**Too Far to Go on?
Distance to School and
University Participation**
*Catalogue no. 11F0019MIE,
no. 191*

SOCIAL INDICATORS

| | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| POPULATION | | | | | | | | | |
| Total population (July 1) | 28,703,142 | 29,035,981 | 29,353,854 | 29,671,892 | 29,987,214 | 30,248,210 | 30,499,219 | 30,769,669 | 31,081,887 |
| 0-17 years | 7,082,130 | 7,129,781 | 7,165,631 | 7,205,638 | 7,209,093 | 7,185,118 | 7,145,879 | 7,114,334 | 7,089,996 |
| 18-64 years | 18,250,340 | 18,466,074 | 18,676,227 | 18,884,263 | 19,119,660 | 19,333,927 | 19,562,808 | 19,801,566 | 20,074,016 |
| 65 years and over | 3,370,672 | 3,440,126 | 3,511,996 | 3,581,991 | 3,658,461 | 3,729,165 | 3,790,532 | 3,853,769 | 3,917,875 |
| <i>Population rates (per 1,000)</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Total growth | 11.1 | 11.2 | 10.8 | 10.4 | 9.8 | 8.0 | 8.6 | 9.0 | 9.4 |
| Birth | 13.5 | 13.3 | 12.9 | 12.3 | 11.6 | 11.3 | 11.1 | 10.8 | 10.8 |
| Death | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 7.3 | 7.2 | 7.4 |
| Natural increase | 6.4 | 6.1 | 5.7 | 5.2 | 4.4 | 4.1 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 3.4 |
| Immigration | 8.9 | 7.7 | 7.2 | 7.6 | 7.2 | 5.8 | 6.2 | 7.4 | 8.0 |
| Total emigration | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 1.4 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.2 |
| Interprovincial migration | 9.9 | 9.9 | 9.8 | 9.6 | 9.7 | 9.9 | 9.1 | 10.4 | 10.3 |
| Marriage | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 5.3 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 4.9 |
| <i>Percent growth in largest census metropolitan areas (to July 1)</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Toronto | 1.4 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 2.5 |
| Montréal | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 1.1 |
| Vancouver | 2.7 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 2.9 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.0 |
| HEALTH | | | | | | | | | |
| Total fertility per woman | 1.66 | 1.66 | 1.64 | 1.59 | 1.55 | 1.54 | 1.53 | .. | .. |
| Teenage pregnancies | 45,412 | 46,484 | 45,161 | 44,140 | 41,540 | 41,588 | .. | .. | .. |
| Pregnancy rate per 1,000 women aged 15-19 | 47.8 | 48.8 | 46.9 | 45.1 | 42.1 | 41.7 | .. | .. | .. |
| Low birthweight babies (< 2,500 grams) as % of all births | 5.7 | 5.8 | 5.8 | 5.7 | 5.8 | 5.7 | 5.6 | .. | .. |
| Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) | 6.3 | 6.3 | 6.1 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.3 | 5.3 | .. | .. |
| <i>Life expectancy at birth (years)</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Men | 74.9 | 75.0 | 75.1 | 75.5 | 75.8 | 76.0 | 76.3 | .. | .. |
| Women | 81.0 | 81.0 | 81.1 | 81.2 | 81.3 | 81.5 | 81.7 | .. | .. |
| <i>Selected causes of death for men (per 100,000 males)*</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Cancer | 243.8 | 242.7 | 239.9 | 237.6 | 230.7 | 231.1 | 228.9 | .. | .. |
| Lung | 78.2 | 75.5 | 73.2 | 72.9 | 69.9 | 70.1 | 70.3 | .. | .. |
| Colorectal | 25.3 | 25.0 | 25.1 | 24.3 | 23.5 | 24.1 | 24.1 | .. | .. |
| Prostate | 31.3 | 30.7 | 31.0 | 29.0 | 28.4 | 27.9 | 26.7 | .. | .. |
| Heart diseases | 259.3 | 249.5 | 245.6 | 240.9 | 231.8 | 227.8 | .. | .. | .. |
| Cerebrovascular diseases | 56.9 | 54.8 | 54.6 | 52.5 | 52.4 | 49.6 | 47.3 | .. | .. |
| External causes** | 68.3 | 65.8 | 66.1 | 64.3 | 60.8 | 61.2 | 63.7 | .. | .. |
| <i>Selected causes of death for women (per 100,000 females)*</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Cancer | 155.4 | 155.6 | 152.4 | 155.7 | 149.1 | 151.6 | 149.4 | .. | .. |
| Lung | 31.8 | 31.9 | 31.3 | 33.6 | 32.3 | 34.5 | 34.8 | .. | .. |
| Colorectal | 16.9 | 16.1 | 16.2 | 15.7 | 15.2 | 15.7 | 15.2 | .. | .. |
| Breast | 29.5 | 30.0 | 28.7 | 28.9 | 27.4 | 26.4 | 25.2 | .. | .. |
| Heart diseases | 141.9 | 139.9 | 137.5 | 135.3 | 130.2 | 126.2 | .. | .. | .. |
| Cerebrovascular diseases | 47.8 | 45.9 | 44.9 | 44.3 | 44.2 | 41.9 | 40.0 | .. | .. |
| External causes** | 26.8 | 25.3 | 25.8 | 25.5 | 24.4 | 24.4 | 25.0 | .. | .. |

.. Data not available.

* Age-standardized to the July 1, 1991 Census of Population (both sexes combined).

** Includes environmental events, circumstances and conditions as the cause of injury, poisoning and other adverse effects.

Sources: Population estimates come from Demography Division, and birth and death statistics come from Health Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

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Lesson plan for "Underweight Canadians"**Objectives**

- To become aware of what the body mass index (BMI) is
- To discuss possible reasons for being underweight

Methods

1. Using the formula for BMI given in the article, have each student calculate their own BMI. Then, using the Canadian guidelines, have them calculate which weight category they belong to. Do the categories change if they now use the International guidelines?
2. Ask the class to discuss what exactly the BMI measures and to explain the circumstances under which it can be misleading.
3. According to the 1998–99 National Population Health Survey, nearly 10% of Canadians are underweight. Have the students list potential reasons why someone in their age group would be underweight.
4. Previous studies have indicated that young women tend to want to lose weight, while young men are more inclined to want to gain. Survey the class to see how many students have a positive body image. Among those who are not happy with their weight, how many would like to lose and how many to gain?
5. Have the students investigate the health implications of being underweight.

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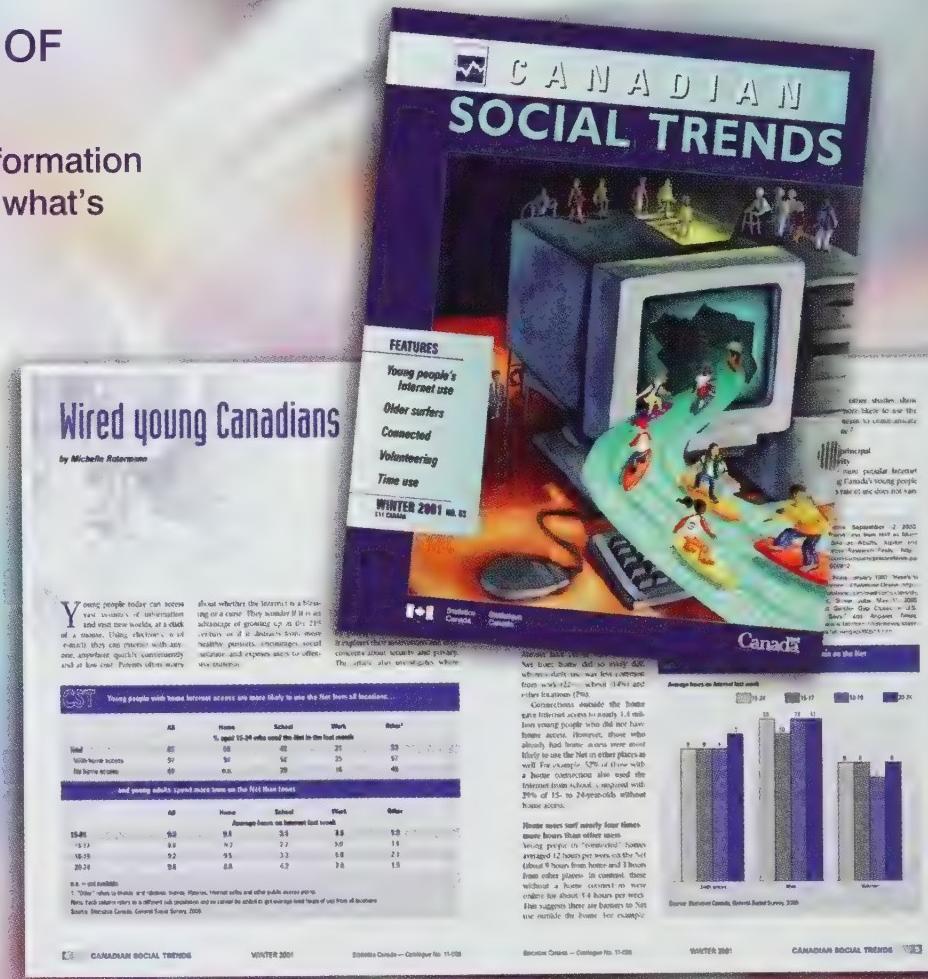
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students with paid employment"** 28**Cover illustrator**

With a background in design and fine art, **Tracy Walker** merges these two disciplines to create her illustrative work. Her illustrations appear in numerous Canadian and US publications. She is influenced by the work of Henri Rousseau, muralist Diego Rivera, Haida art, and Islamic art and architecture. Tracy currently resides in Uxbridge, Ontario.



Pockets of belief: Religious attendance patterns in Canada

by Warren Clark



Pockets of high religious attendance found in almost every province

In 1946, about 67% of the adult population attended religious services on a weekly basis.¹ According to the General Social Survey, by 2001 the weekly attendance rate had slipped to 20%; the monthly religious attendance rate² also fell: from 43% in 1986 to 31% in 2001.³ Attendance rates vary widely across Canada. Previous research has shown that historically Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick have had the highest monthly attendance rates while Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia have

-
1. Veevers, J.E. and E.M. Gee. 1988. *Religiously Unaffiliated Canadians: Demographic and Social Correlates of Secularization – Final Report*. p. 18.
 2. Attendance at religious services at least once a month (includes weekly attendees).
 3. Monthly religious attendance rates have also fallen in the United States to 45% in 2000 from 54% in 1986 while weekly rates dropped to 25% in 2000 from 32% in 1986. Source: U.S. General Social Survey, Survey Documentation and Analysis, University of California, Berkeley. <http://sda.berkeley.edu> (accessed September 23, 2002).

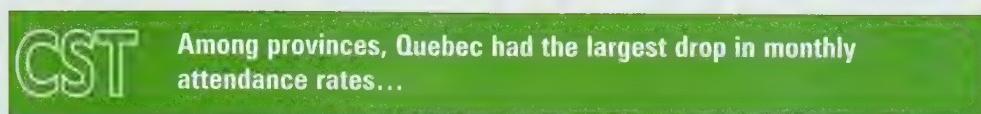
had the lowest.⁴ Yet pockets of high attendance rates often exist in provinces that have low attendance and vice versa. The attached map of Canada shows pockets of high attendance in Cape Breton, the Gaspé and parts of southwestern Ontario near Lake Huron, parts of southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. High attendance is also widespread in Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. British Columbia is the only province that does not seem to have a high attendance region. Although New Brunswick is a high attendance province, there are several census divisions where monthly attendance is at the middle level.

Quebec sees big drop in religious attendance

Quebec's monthly attendance dropped the most during the 1990s, with the census metropolitan areas (CMAs) other than Montréal seeing the largest decline. As a result, by the turn of the century (1999 to 2001) Montréal and Québec City had the lowest monthly attendance rates among CMAs. Unlike the rest of the country, British Columbia and Toronto and Vancouver saw small increases in monthly religious attendance rates between the early 1990s and the end of the decade.

Age and immigration status influence religious attendance rates

Many factors influence the level of religious attendance, including demographics, immigration patterns and the cultural history of a region. Religious attendance is strongly related to age: seniors have the highest attendance rates, while those aged 25 to 34 have the lowest. Therefore, one might expect that high attendance rates would occur in areas with higher percentages of



Religious attendance (at least once per month)

| | Average 1989-1993 | Average 1999-2001 | Difference |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| | % of population aged 15 and over | | |
| Canada | 36 | 32 | -5* |
| Newfoundland | 47 | 43 | -4* |
| Prince Edward Island | 56 | 53 | -3 |
| Nova Scotia | 39 | 36 | -3* |
| New Brunswick | 55 | 43 | -11* |
| Quebec | 37 | 25 | -13* |
| Ontario | 38 | 36 | -2* |
| Manitoba | 37 | 36 | 0 |
| Saskatchewan | 43 | 39 | -5* |
| Alberta | 32 | 31 | -1 |
| British Columbia | 23 | 25 | 2* |

... while among CMAs, Vancouver had the largest increase

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|----|------|
| St. John's | 44 | 36 | -8* |
| Halifax | 37 | 31 | -6* |
| Saint John | 48 | 43 | -5* |
| Saguenay | 46 | 29 | -17* |
| Québec | 37 | 21 | -15* |
| Sherbrooke | 39 | 26 | -13* |
| Trois-Rivières | 40 | 29 | -12* |
| Montréal | 29 | 21 | -8* |
| Ottawa-Hull | 35 | 28 | -7* |
| Kingston | 40 | 33 | -7 |
| Oshawa | 37 | 30 | -7* |
| Toronto | 37 | 38 | 2* |
| Hamilton | 36 | 36 | 0 |
| St. Catharines-Niagara | 43 | 38 | -5 |
| Kitchener | 39 | 37 | -2 |
| London | 38 | 35 | -3 |
| Windsor | 46 | 38 | -8* |
| Sudbury | 43 | 40 | -3 |
| Thunder Bay | 30 | 31 | 1 |
| Winnipeg | 34 | 34 | 0 |
| Saskatoon | 41 | 37 | -4 |
| Regina | 35 | 33 | -2 |
| Calgary | 28 | 29 | 1 |
| Edmonton | 31 | 30 | -1 |
| Abbotsford | 38 | 41 | 3 |
| Vancouver | 24 | 28 | 4* |
| Victoria | 20 | 20 | 1 |

* Difference is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

4. Clark, W. Winter 2000. "Patterns of religious attendance." *Canadian Social Trends*. p. 23-27.

CANADA

Monthly Religious Attendance 1999 - 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Almost every year since 1985, Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) has interviewed adults aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces. The GSS has collected information about the frequency of attendance at religious services (excluding special occasions such as weddings, funerals and baptisms). The accompanying map and tables show the percentage of the adult population aged 15 and over who attend religious services at least once per month (including weekly attendance). The monthly attendance rates on the map have a coefficient of variation of 16.6% or less. To maintain this level of reliability, some geographically contiguous census divisions in all provinces except Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island were combined. The maps are divided into four religious attendance categories: 1) sparsely populated areas consisting of the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut which were not surveyed by the GSS. In addition, insufficient numbers of respondents were surveyed in the northern parts of several provinces to produce reliable estimates for these areas. This group represents less than 1% of the adult population aged 15 and over; 2) low levels of monthly religious attendance where less than 25% of the adult population attended at least once a month. This group represents about a quarter of the adult population; 3) mid-level of monthly religious attendance of between 25% and just less than 40%. This group represents about 60% of the adult population; and 4) high level of monthly religious attendance where 40% or more of the adult population attended religious services at least once a month. This group represents about 14% of the adult population.

seniors. This, in fact, is true for Saskatchewan, parts of Manitoba, Cape Breton, the Lake Huron shore in Ontario and the Gaspé in Quebec, which have somewhat higher percentages of seniors. There are, however, other areas with high percentages of seniors but not high religious attendance rates.

Immigrants are concentrated in Canada's three largest CMAs (Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver). Because immigrants attend religious services more frequently than Canadian-born adults, their presence in these cities may influence attendance rates. Toronto and Vancouver saw an increase in monthly attendance rates, while Montréal's rate declined less than those of other CMAs in Quebec. Nationally, monthly religious attendance rates of Canadian-born adults dropped from 35% in the 1989 to 1993 period to 28% between 1999 and 2001, while the rate for those born outside Canada increased slightly from 42% to 45%. In Toronto and Vancouver, the monthly religious attendance rates of adults born outside Canada increased while the Canadian-born rate decreased or showed no significant change. In Montréal, attendance rates declined among both adults born outside Canada and the Canadian-born, but the drop was smaller for immigrants.

Immigration influences religious attendance in the three largest CMAs

Religious attendance (at least once per month)

| | Average 1989-1993 | Average 1999-2001 | Difference |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| | % of population aged 15 and over | | |
| Montréal | | | |
| Canadian-born | 26 | 17 | -9* |
| Born outside Canada | 44 | 40 | -4 |
| Toronto | | | |
| Canadian-born | 31 | 28 | -3* |
| Born outside Canada | 44 | 50 | 6* |
| Vancouver | | | |
| Canadian-born | 19 | 21 | 2 |
| Born outside Canada | 35 | 39 | 4* |

* Difference is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Warren Clark is a senior analyst with Canadian Social Trends.

On May 13, 2003, Statistics Canada will release 2001 Census data on the size, composition, and geographical distribution of religions in Canada. Data will be available on the Statistics Canada Web site www.statcan.ca on that day.

Traumatic life events

by Susan Crompton

Everyone complains these days about being "stressed out." Some people are impatient and frustrated with life's inconveniences; others feel irritated and aggrieved by

the hassles of everyday living. But there are more severe causes of stress in life: a family member is gravely ill, a close friend dies, a couple separates. Even coping with happy occasions,

like marriage or the birth of a child, can be stressful.

Stress has a proven effect on people's physical and mental health, which is why both psychologists and

CST What you should know about this study

This article is based on data drawn from the 1998 General Social Survey (GSS). In that year, the GSS interviewed over 10,000 Canadians aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces. Among the many questions asked was a sequence of questions about several key life experiences. This article examines data about five of these experiences, defined as traumatic life events. More than 9,900 respondents, representing over 22.1 million Canadians, answered these questions.¹ The data provide information only about the type of event experienced in the preceding 12 months but not the number of times that it occurred. For example, even if two family members had died, the respondent would be able to report only that she had experienced the death of a family member.

Traumatic life event: in the 12 months preceding the survey, the respondent had experienced one or more of the following five events: the death of a family member, the death of a close friend, the serious illness or injury of a family member or a friend, had themselves been seriously ill or injured, or someone had left or moved into their home (including the birth of a child or a new relationship).² For the sake of variety, "major crisis" and "severe shock" are used as synonyms.

The Holmes-Rahe scale

In 1967, Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe published the "Social Readjustment Rating Scale" in the

Journal of Psychosomatic Research. The scale attempts to quantify the impact of 43 stressful events in terms of the extent to which a person would need to adjust their established lifestyle in order to adapt to the situation. Selected values from the scale are reprinted below (highest value is 100).

| Stress event | Event value |
|---|-------------|
| Death of spouse | 100 |
| Divorce | 73 |
| Marital separation | 65 |
| Death of a close family relation (excludes spouse) | 63 |
| Illness or wounds (illness or injury) | 53 |
| Marriage | 50 |
| Dismissal (job loss) | 47 |
| Marriage reconciliation | 45 |
| Illness of a family member | 44 |
| Pregnancy | 40 |
| Addition of a new family member | 39 |
| Death of a close friend | 37 |

Source: <http://www.mdmultimedia.com/Formatio/Socio/Holmes-e.htm>
(accessed October 22, 2002).

1. 8% of respondents did not answer the questions at all and are excluded from the study.
2. Three questions in this sequence are not included in the analysis: change of job or starting a new job (affecting 14% of adults aged 15 and over); loss of job (6%); and sense of belonging to the community (57% felt very or somewhat strong ties).

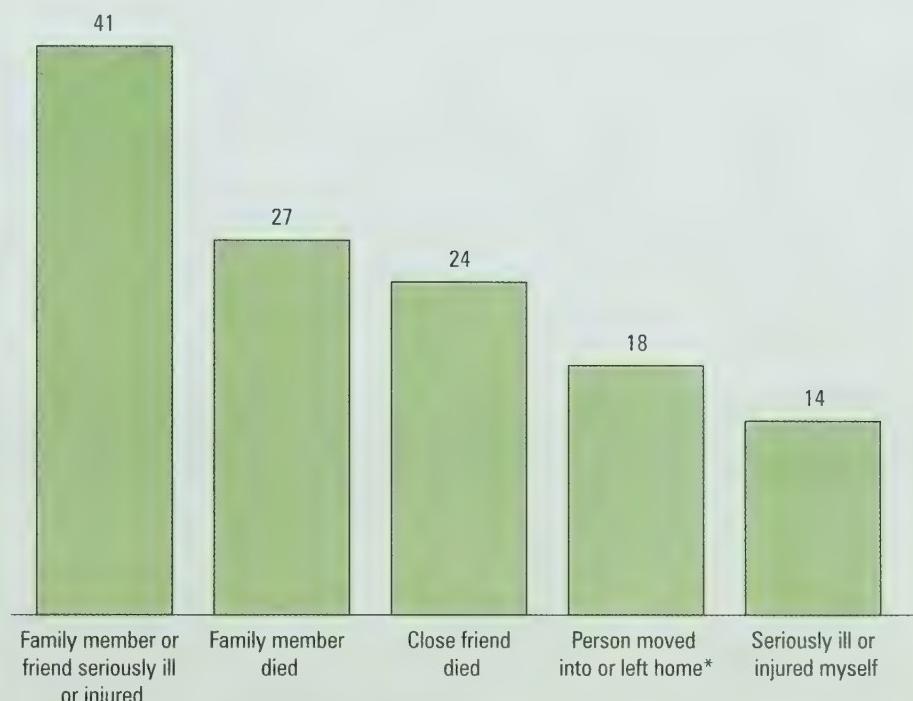
medical researchers are concerned with stressors. When Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe developed their now-famous "Social Readjustment Rating Scale" (published in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* in 1967), their purpose was to rate a life event in terms of the amount of effort it would take a person to adapt to the situation. Events receiving the highest weight are those involving loss: the death of a spouse is rated at 100 out of 100; divorce, separation and death of a family member ranged from the mid-60s to mid-70s. Further down the scale are events that are joyful but nevertheless disruptive of a person's routine; getting married scores almost as high as suffering through a serious personal illness or injury, while adding a new member to the family is almost as difficult to adjust to as a family member's long illness. In a controlled experiment lasting two months, Holmes and Rahe found that people who had accumulated stress scores of 300 points or higher in the six months preceding the experiment had a significantly higher rate of illness than those who scored lower.¹

In 1998, the General Social Survey (GSS) asked respondents if they had experienced any traumatic life events in the previous 12 months. This article finds out how many Canadians have to cope with difficult personal events like the serious illness or injury of a close friend, family member or themselves; the death of a family member or close friend; or someone leaving (or moving into) their home, including the birth of a child or new relationship.

Traumatic life events affect two in three Canadians

According to the 1998 GSS, over two-thirds of Canadians aged 15 and over had experienced at least one traumatic life event in the 12 months preceding the survey. The most common event — reported by 41% of

% of population aged 15 and over



* Includes birth of child, new relationship.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

adults — was the serious illness or injury of a close friend or family member. About one-quarter (27%) were affected by the death of a family member and 24% by the death of a close friend.

Not only do the majority of Canadians undergo such severe shocks in a year, but many have to cope with multiple crises. Almost one-quarter (23%) reported they had experienced two types of crises in the same year, and over one-sixth (16%) three or more. Perhaps because of their role as caregivers, women were more likely to have experienced several types of traumatic events: 17% had dealt with three or more, compared with 13% of men.

The greater number of types of events reported by women may also reflect women's larger numbers in the

older population. Adults aged 55 years and over were significantly more likely than younger people to report having a traumatic life event (74% versus 65%). And although older men were just as likely as women aged 55 or over to report one or two types of events in the previous year (73% versus 74%), they were significantly less likely to report having three or more — 17% compared with 22% of women.

Multiple traumatic life events more common to those reporting illness or death

It is not surprising that the more types of crises a person had lived through,

1. Source: <http://www.teachhealth.com> (accessed October 22, 2002).

Over one-third of Canadians experienced multiple traumatic life events in the previous year

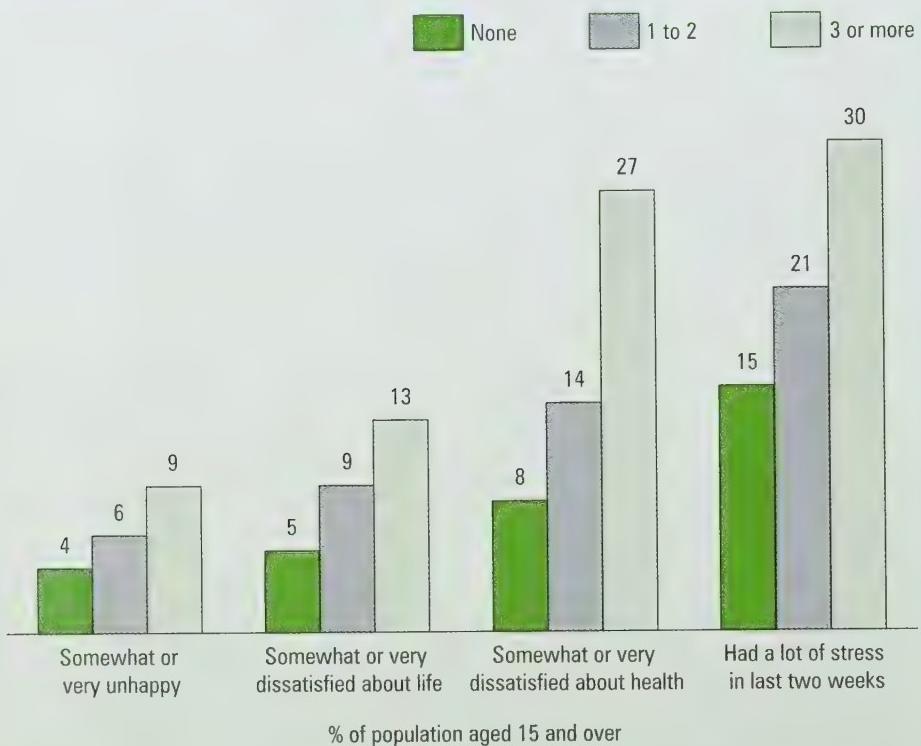
Experienced traumatic life event (TLE) in past year

| | Both sexes | Women | Men |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|-----|
| | % of population aged 15 and over | | |
| No TLE | 33 | 31 | 34 |
| One type of TLE | 30 | 29 | 31 |
| Two types of TLE | 23 | 24 | 22 |
| Three types of TLE | 11 | 13 | 10 |
| Four or five types of TLE | 4 | 4 | 3 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

The more types of traumatic life events people had to cope with, the less satisfied they were with the state of their health

Traumatic life events experienced in past year



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

the older they tended to be. Canadians dealing with severe shocks involving illness or injury and death tended to be older — their average age ranged between 42 and 50 years old — and serious illnesses and deaths often occurred in the same year for

these people. For example, the great majority of adults who said that a family member or friend had been seriously ill had dealt with additional crises in the past year — 41% with two and 35% with three or more. In many cases, the other events included

a death: almost two-thirds of those who reported the serious illness or injury of a close relative or friend also said a family member had died that year.

On the other hand, half the people who said that someone had moved into (or left) their home were under 35, which is the prime family formation age. Compared to adults reporting the other types of major crises, they were most likely to have experienced only that one event in the previous 12 months.

Stress often reduces people's enjoyment of life. Compared with others, people who reported three or more types of severe shocks were significantly more likely to be unhappy, dissatisfied about life in general and dissatisfied with their current state of health.² And they were much more likely than others to feel they had gone through the wringer very recently, with 30% saying they had experienced a lot of stress in the previous two weeks.

Stress can make you sick

The physical and mental effects of too much stress can include fatigue, depression, anxiety attacks, sleep disturbance, ulcers, bowel problems, thyroid gland problems, high blood pressure, abnormal heart beat, skin rashes, and decreased resistance to infections. The way in which too much stress can manifest itself depends mainly on a person's physiological "weak link" (for example, their cardiovascular system, immune system,

2. When those who reported a serious personal illness or injury are excluded from the analysis, 20% of people who experienced three or more types of traumatic events say they are very or somewhat dissatisfied with the current state of their health. The corresponding percentages for those who reported no traumatic events (10%) and those who reported one or two (15%) are statistically significantly lower.

digestive system or brain), which tends to be an inherited characteristic.³ Of course, stress can also lead to problems if people deal with it in unhealthy ways, such as drinking, smoking, giving up exercise, or overeating.

One theory that may help to explain the fact that some people appear to handle stress better than others relates to "sense of coherence." A sense of coherence is "the extent to which people feel that life is meaningful, manageable, and comprehensible."⁴ Having a high sense of coherence may allow people to cope better with sudden unexpected or unpleasant events. Analysis of data from the National Population Health Survey shows that people with a high sense of coherence tend to be in better health than those with a lower sense. The study could not, however, establish which factor is the cause and which the effect. In other words, does being in better health produce a strong sense of coherence, or does a strong sense of coherence produce better health?⁵

Effects of day-to-day stress

Between the annoyances of daily living and the shock of a severe trauma are chronic stressful situations. Money issues — such as having a big mortgage or loan, or undergoing a change in financial position — are an important cause of ongoing stress. Other stressors include changing responsibilities at work, conflict with colleagues or supervisors, arguments with family members, and so on.

The 1998 GSS asked people who had had a lot or moderate amount of stress in the past two weeks (51% of Canadian adults) to identify the main cause of that stress: 44% replied that it was work, 18% named their family, 11% their finances, 9% school work, 6% their personal health and 4% stress in general. For some people, these worries can become quite debilitating, wearing down their strength and their health. In an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted for CTV and the *Globe and Mail* in 2002, two-thirds (67%) of respondents felt that they put too much pressure on themselves; 48% reported that their sleep patterns suffered, and 41% said their personal health was affected by stress.⁶

A recent Statistics Canada study examined the long-term health of adults who experienced high personal stress; that is, they were trying to take on too much at once, felt pressure to be like other people, felt that others expected too much of them, felt that their work around the home was not appreciated, felt that others were too critical. The results showed that highly stressed men and women had lower odds of enjoying "continuing good health" in subsequent years, compared with adults who had not been stressed out. They were also more likely to develop chronic conditions during the next four years.⁷

Summary

Over two-thirds of Canadians aged 15 and over have experienced at least one traumatic life event in the past

year. The most common type of event was the serious illness or injury of a close friend or family member, followed by the death of a family member or a close friend. Almost four in 10 adults coped with two or more crises during this period. People aged 55 or over were more likely than younger adults to report coping with three or more types of traumatic events. Women were also more likely than men to handle multiple shocks over the year, perhaps because of their role as caregivers and because they account for a larger proportion of the older population. Not surprisingly, people who had lived through at least three types of major life crises were significantly more likely than others to feel unhappy, dissatisfied with life, dissatisfied with their current state of health and highly stressed.



Susan Crompton is Editor-in-Chief of *Canadian Social Trends*.

3. <http://www.teachhealth.com> (accessed October 22, 2002).

4. Hood, S.C., M.P. Beaudet and G. Catlin. Spring 1996. "A healthy outlook." *Health Reports* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003) 7, 4: 25.

5. *ibid.* 21-32.

6. *Canadians and stress: A special report.* Ipsos-Reid: Public Release Date September 19, 2002. http://www.angusreid.com/media/dsp_displaypr_cdn.cfm?id_to_view=1620 (accessed September 23, 2002).

7. *Health Reports.* 1996.

Family violence against seniors¹

by Mia Dauvergne

This article has been adapted from Chapter 2 of *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-224. Released June 26, 2002.

Persons aged 65 years and older constitute one of the fastest growing segments of the Canadian population. In 2001, an estimated 3.9 million seniors made up 13% of the country's population; population projections estimate that, by 2026, older Canadians will number almost 8 million, or about 21% of the population.

One potential effect from Canada's "greying" population is a possible rise in the incidence of abuse towards seniors. Shrinking health and social services in the early 1990s, as well as the shift away from institutional care for the aged, will likely increase the demand on family members to provide care for their older relatives.² This may expose a greater number of seniors to the risk of domestic abuse. With each passing year, the need to quantify and understand abuse against older adults by family members will become increasingly important. This article focuses on violence committed against seniors.

Abuse against older adults³

As with all forms of family violence, abuse and neglect of older adults is largely a hidden problem. And since seniors are vulnerable to frailty, poor physical or mental health, and financial or emotional dependency, they may be more at risk for mistreatment. Abuse can occur in private dwellings or in institutions at the hands of spouses, children, other relatives, caregivers or other persons in situations of power and/or trust.⁴ The physical, psychological, social, and

economic consequences of abuse and neglect can be devastating for older adults who may be isolated, on fixed incomes or unable to seek help.

Several theories have tried to explain the existence of abuse against older adults.⁵ The most widely accepted explanation suggests that stressful situations — usually the physical or mental impairment of the older person — cause the caregiver to be abusive. Others contend that abuse against seniors occurs because of learned behaviour: abusers model

1. In this article "seniors" and "older adults" are used interchangeably to refer to persons aged 65 years or older.
2. McDaniel, S.A. and E.M. Gee. 1993. "Social policies regarding caregiving to elders: Canadian contradictions." *Journal of Aging and Social Policy* 5, 1-2: 57-72.
3. See "What you should know about this study" for a discussion about the difficulties of defining senior abuse.
4. McDonald, L. and A. Collins. 2000. *Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults: A Discussion Paper*. Ottawa: Health Canada, The National Clearinghouse on Family Violence.
5. McDonald and Collins. 2000; Phillips, L.R. 1986. "Theoretical explanations of elder abuse: Competing hypotheses and unresolved issues." In *Elder Abuse: Conflict in the Family*. Edited by K.A. Pillemer and R.S. Wolf. Dover, Ma: Auburn House Publishing Company.

This article uses self-reported data from the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization, which is the most recent survey data available on abuse against older adults. The GSS interviewed more than 4,000 older Canadians living in private households about their experiences regarding emotional and financial abuse as well as physical and sexual violence by children, caregivers and spouses.¹ This article also draws on detailed police data available from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey, which collects information about the frequency and type of violent crime, as well as characteristics about victims and accused persons. However, the results are not nationally representative: in 2000, 166 police forces in nine provinces participated in the UCR2, representing 53% of the national volume of reported crime.

Currently, there is no uniform definition of abuse against seniors. Abuse can take many different forms and include such behaviour as physical assault, emotional/psychological abuse, financial manipulation or exploitation, and neglect. Other forms of abuse include sexual abuse, medicinal abuse (e.g. withholding medication or over-medicating), systemic abuse (i.e. procedures and processes within institutions that allow harmful situations to be created or maintained), violation of civic/human rights (e.g. denial of privacy, denial of visitors, restriction of liberty, mail censorship) and abandonment.

violence after witnessing or suffering from abuse. Some theorists assert that physical, emotional and financial dependencies between the victim and the abuser contribute to abuse. Still others believe that abuse against older adults is spousal abuse "grown old" and question whether spousal abuse is ever first-time abuse in old age. Finally, some researchers and practitioners believe that mistreatment of seniors reflect, at least in some part,

prejudicial societal attitudes and beliefs towards the elderly.⁶

Prevalence of abuse against older adults

Data from the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) show that about 7% of seniors reported experiencing some form of emotional or financial abuse by an adult child, caregiver or spouse in the five-year period preceding the survey. Emotional abuse was reported

Limitations of data on violence against seniors

Estimates of the extent of abuse against older adults are available from two types of data sources: 1) victimization surveys based upon self-reported accounts of violence; and 2) police statistics. Both have some drawbacks that may result in an under-representation of the problem. Surveys capture only what victims themselves disclose; also, the household telephone survey method that is frequently used to gather this type of information does not reach respondents who do not have a telephone or who are infirm, suffer from hearing difficulties, live in institutions or who may be isolated in some other way.

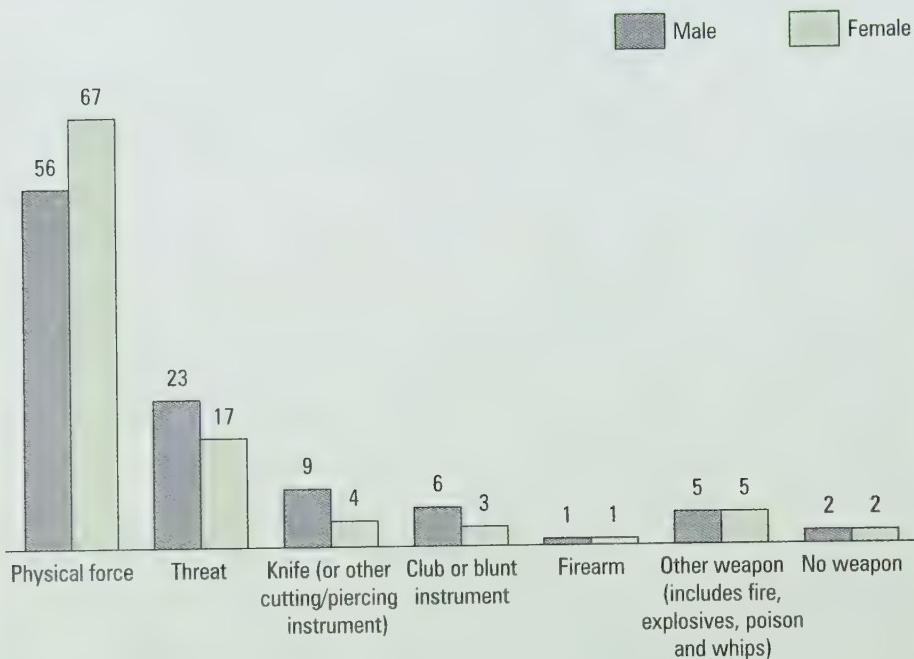
Data from police records cannot provide information on abuse that does not come to the attention of police. Older people who are mentally or physically impaired may not be capable of reporting an incident of abuse or describing its details. Or, if a report is made, it may not be believed. Victims may fear reprisals from the aggressor or negative consequences such as being removed from their home and placed in an institution if they file a report. Financial abuse, such as fraud or theft, may occur without the senior's knowledge.

1. Senior respondents were not asked about sexual assaults by children. A caregiver is defined as anyone, either paid or unpaid, who provides assistance or health care in the respondent's home. This includes meal preparation, personal care or medical assistance. Spouses include current, former and common-law partners.

most frequently (7%), followed by financial abuse (1%) and physical or sexual violence (1%). Almost 2% of older Canadians said they had experienced more than one type of abuse.

6. Harbison, J. 1999. "Models of intervention for elder abuse and neglect: A Canadian perspective on ageism, participation, and empowerment." *Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect* 10, 3-4: 1-17.

% of victims of family violence aged 65 and over



Note: Data are not nationally representative, being based on data from 166 police departments representing 53% of the national volume of crime in 2000. Excludes Toronto. Excludes cases where most serious weapon was unknown. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey, 2000.

Emotional and financial abuse against older adults cuts across all socio-demographic lines. However, some characteristics are associated with higher rates of emotional and financial victimization by family members. These include being a man, being divorced or separated, having some postsecondary schooling and living in a rural area.⁷

Common assault most frequent offence experienced by seniors in 2000

In addition to data from the 1999 GSS, this study uses detailed information available from police records. While these statistics only capture a portion of all episodes of violence suffered by older adults, they do yield important analytical insights because

- Pottie Bunge, V. 2000. "Abuse of older adults by family members." In *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2000*. Edited by V. Pottie Bunge and D. Locke. (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-224).

| Victimized by: | Number of victims | | | % of victims | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| | Total | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male |
| Family member | 1,006 | 649 | 357 | 28 | 36 | 19 |
| Spouse | 312 | 236 | 76 | 31 | 36 | 21 |
| Parent | 53 | 28 | 25 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Adult child | 398 | 243 | 155 | 40 | 37 | 43 |
| Sibling | 110 | 60 | 50 | 11 | 9 | 14 |
| Extended family | 133 | 82 | 51 | 13 | 13 | 14 |
| Non-family person | 2,407 | 1,052 | 1,355 | 66 | 59 | 74 |
| Unknown person | 214 | 91 | 123 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Total | 3,627 | 1,792 | 1,835 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Note: Data are not nationally representative, being based on data from 166 police departments representing 53% of the national volume of crime in 2000.

Family data excludes cases where relationship between victim and accused was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey, 2000.

Between 1974 and 2000, the overall average annual homicide rate against seniors was 1.7 per 100,000, or about 45 older victims per year. (The average annual rate for the general population during this period is 2.4 per 100,000, or 637 victims per year.) The rate peaked during the 1970s and has been gradually declining (with some fluctuations) over the past 20 years. In 2000, the rate was 1.2 per 100,000 population aged 65 and over (and 1.8 per 100,000 for the general population). In that year, family members were responsible for 26% of senior homicides (10 homicides) and non-family members, primarily casual acquaintances, for the remaining 74%.

Among those senior homicides committed by family members between 1974 and 2000, spouses were the most likely perpetrators (39%), followed by adult children (37%) and extended family members (24%). More than half (52%) of the older female victims of family homicide were killed by their spouses

compared to one-quarter (25%) of older male victims. In contrast, older men were almost twice as likely as older women to be killed by their adult sons (42% versus 24%).

Many studies identify a history of family violence as a risk factor for family homicide. A 1997 study identified it as a particularly strong predictor of female homicide at the hands of a spouse or other family member.¹ According to data from the Homicide Survey, between 1997 and 2000,² 43% of persons accused of murdering a senior family member had a history of family violence with the victim.

they usually represent the most serious cases.

In 2000, according to police-reported statistics, common assault was the most frequent offence experienced by older adults from family members (54%). Many seniors were victims of uttering threats (21%) and assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (13%). This pattern was the case regardless of whether the victim was female or male. On the other hand, offences committed by non-family members were slightly different, with almost one-third (30%) of older victims being a victim of robbery.

Physical force⁸ was the most serious form of violence present in assaults by family members, although it was more common against older women than older men — 67% compared with 56%. On the other hand, older men were more likely to

have been victimized by someone with a weapon.

Men are most likely perpetrators of family violence against older adults⁹

In general, police-reported data show that men are the most likely perpetrators of violence in the family. This is also the case when the victimized person is a senior: in 2000, 80% of people accused of violently victimizing an older family member were men.

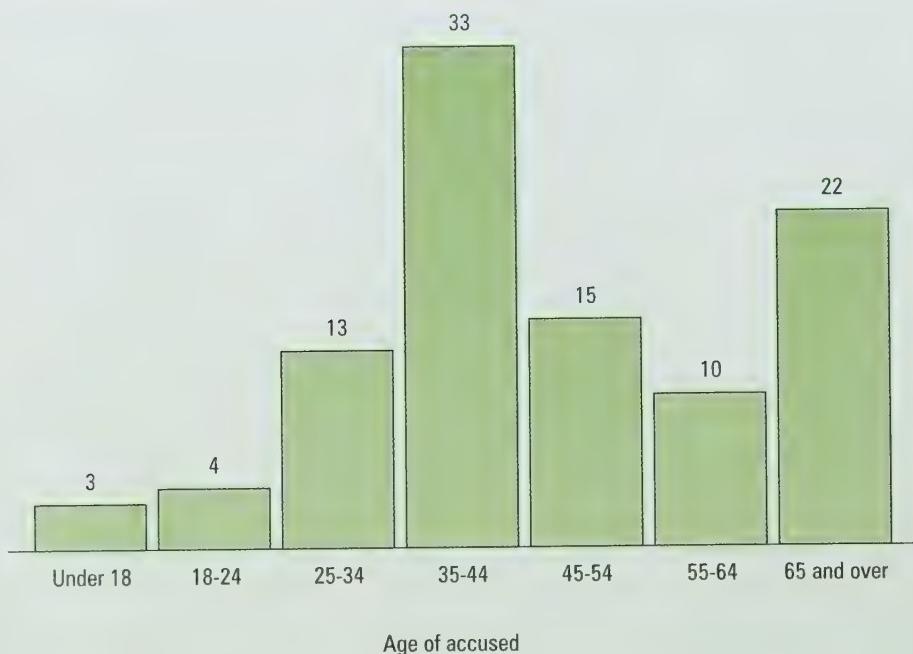
In cases of family violence towards seniors, adult children and spouses accounted for almost three-quarters (71%) of victimizations. Older men were most often victims of their adult children (43%) whereas older women were just as likely to be victims of their spouses (36%) as their adult children (37%). These relationships are reflected in the ages of the accused persons. More than half (54%) of

family members accused of violent offences against older adults were either aged 35 to 44 years (the children) or 65 years or older (the spouse).

8. Physical force involves the use of one's own body strength and/or action (choking, pushing or punching) that is intended to cause bodily injury or death. Classification is based on the most serious weapon present during the incident, even though it may not have been used against the victim. Due to data quality issues that result in physical force being coded as "other," Toronto is excluded from the analysis on methods of violence.

9. Analysis of accused characteristics is based only on those incidents for which there was a single accused and are derived from a subset of incidents from the UCR2 Survey, which itself only represents 53% of the national volume of crime.

% of accused family members



Note: Data are not nationally representative, being based on data from 166 police departments representing 53% of the national volume of crime in 2000. Excludes cases where age of the accused was unknown. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey, 2000.

Consequences of family violence against older adults

Older victims of family violence may be more vulnerable to complications resulting from physical violence than younger victims. For instance, physical injuries could exacerbate pre-existing health problems or inhibit a senior's ability to function independently.

In 2000, a considerable proportion of older victims suffered minor injuries (37%), while major physical injuries or death accounted for 2% of violent crimes committed by family members. Although hospitalization data are limited because they do not identify the perpetrator's relationship to the victim, statistics for 1999-2000 indicate that 135 women and 146 men aged 65 years or older were admitted to hospital for an injury resulting from an intentional violent incident.¹⁰ Fights and assaults were the most frequent

cause of injury requiring admission to hospital among both older men and older women.

Summary

Most Canadian provinces and territories have introduced special adult protection or guardianship legislation designed to protect seniors from abuse and neglect. However, considerable controversy surrounds the issue. Proponents of the legal approach argue that legislative interventions safeguard the rights and improve the level of functioning of older adults. Critics, on the other hand, maintain that legislative responses promote ageism and fail to respect older people's independence by assuming that they are incapable of seeking help on their own.

Abuse and neglect of seniors also have widespread social and economic

costs to the civil and criminal justice systems, the health care system, community services, and business and labour market institutions. Assessing the full extent of these costs is a complex and difficult task. While some Canadian studies have attempted to estimate the cost of violence against women, none has yet attempted to single out the costs associated with violence against older adults.

10. Data for patients admitted for at least one night; does not include individuals treated on an outpatient basis.



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Housing: An income issue

by Sophie Lefebvre

This article has been adapted from "Housing: An Income Issue," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, June 2002, vol. 3, no. 6, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-001-XIE.

Housing is fundamental to quality of life — in addition to sufficient food and clothing, people expect to have a decent dwelling that is in good condition and large enough to accommodate the household members. But some households face problems affording good housing and find themselves forced to choose between appropriate shelter and other necessities. Living in poor housing can have permanent consequences, especially on children; accommodation that is crowded or in disrepair has been shown to have negative effects on children's health, behaviour and development.¹

This article examines how Canadians were housed in 2000. What percentage lived in owner-occupied homes? Were their homes in good condition? Was the size suitable for their needs? And what proportion of their income was spent on housing?

Ownership is tied to age and location

Home ownership is a long-term investment that can help maintain a person's standard of living over time. In 2000, two-thirds of Canadian households owned the dwellings they lived in, while the remainder were tenants (including 4% living in government-subsidized housing²). Ownership rates increased consistently with age until 65 years, when they fell off slightly. Half of all owners were mortgage-free, the proportion increasing with age; by age 55, most owners could "burn their mortgage contract." At 11%, owners living in mortgage-free homes carried a lower housing expenditure ratio (housing expenditures divided by household after-tax income) than did either owners with mortgages (25%) or tenants

(28%). If needed, some mortgage-free owners could generate additional funds by trading down to a less expensive home or, in the case of older owners, negotiating a reverse mortgage.³

1. Jackson, A. and P. Roberts. 2001. "Physical housing conditions and the well-being of children." Background paper on housing for *The Progress of Canada's Children 2001*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.
2. Approximately 440,000 households (4%) reported that they paid reduced rent due to government-subsidized housing from federal, provincial or municipal programs. This may significantly underestimate the real number of households that benefited from reduced rent in 2000. For example, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's *Canadian Housing Statistics* (2000), reported that 639,000 households received assistance under existing federal agreements.
3. A reverse mortgage allows homeowners age 62 and over to convert between 10% and 40% of their home equity into an income stream. The amount is based on the assessed value of the home and the owner's age (that is, the older the owner, the larger the percentage that can be converted).

This article uses data from the 2000 Survey of Household Spending (SHS), an annual survey of household expenditures, income, dwelling characteristics, and household facilities conducted in approximately 15,000 private households in the 10 provinces. This study population was limited to households consisting of one economic family that rented or owned its dwelling throughout the entire year, reported positive housing costs and income, and had a housing expenditure ratio not exceeding 100%. These households represented 90% of the total SHS sample.

Adjusted household after-tax income/household income: the sum of the after-tax incomes of all members of the household aged 16 and over in 2000, then adjusted to account for household size, the presence of children, and the contributions of part-year household members in order to compare all households on a common income basis.

Adjusted after-tax income quintiles/income quintiles: households ranked in ascending order of adjusted household after-tax income and partitioned into five equal groups.

Housing expenditures/housing costs: yearly spending on principal accommodation. For *owners*, these

included regular mortgage payments, property taxes, utilities (water, fuel and electricity), and condominium charges. For *renters*, they included utilities (water, fuel and electricity), if not included in the rent.

Low-income household: the household has an adjusted after-tax income less than 50% of the median adjusted after-tax income in its area. Twenty different areas were defined. Each of the 10 provinces was divided into urban and rural to allow for the difference between urban and rural housing markets.

Adequate condition/needng major repairs: the respondent's self-reported assessment of the condition of their dwelling. A dwelling was considered inadequate if it needed major repairs. Examples of major repairs were provided to the respondent.

Suitable housing:¹ one bedroom for each of the following members of a household: cohabiting adult couples; unattached household members 18 years of age and over; same sex pairs of children under age 18; additional boy and/or girl in the family unless they are two opposite sex siblings under 5 years of age, in which case they are expected to share a bedroom.

1. Definition from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's *Core Housing Need in Canada*, 1991, p. 4.

Ownership also varied by region and community size. Ownership was most common in the Atlantic and Prairie regions (above 75%) as was mortgage-free ownership (43%). By contrast, Quebec had the lowest rate of homeownership in the country (58%). In rural areas of Canada, 86% of households owned the dwelling they lived in, compared with 64% in urban centres. Over half of rural owners were without mortgages but this was true for 30% of urban dwellers. This may be because the lower real estate value in small towns enables households to pay off their mortgage faster, and because farms tend to be passed down from one generation to the next.

One in seven homes needed major repairs or was not a suitable size
In 2000, the vast majority (86%) of households lived in a home that did not need major repairs (in good condition) and had enough bedrooms to meet their needs (suitable in size). The remaining 14% lived below these condition and size norms — 8% in dwellings needing major repairs, 5% in dwellings unsuitable in size, and under 1% in dwellings that were both too small and in poor condition.

Renters were more likely than owners to live in dwellings that did not meet the norms, especially in terms of size — 11% of renters compared with 3% of owners. Also, lone mothers

were more likely to live in inappropriate accommodation — 10% in housing needing repairs and about 15% in housing without a suitable number of bedrooms.

The proportion of couples with children who lived in dwellings needing major repairs (10%) was only slightly higher than that of couples without children (8%). But couples with children were much more likely to live in housing that was not a suitable size (6% versus 1%). In rural areas, 13% of households lived in dwellings in poor repair, compared with 8% in urban areas, but urban households were more likely to be crowded (6% versus 2%). Some 8% of

| | Households | | | % living in housing which was | | |
|--|---------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Total | Owners | Tenants | Total | Needing repair* | Unsuitable size* |
| | '000 | | | % | | |
| Total | 10,501 | 67 | 33 | 14 | 9 | 6 |
| Community | | | | | | |
| Urban | 8,733 | 64 | 36 | 14 | 8 | 6 |
| Rural | 1,768 | 86 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 2 |
| Household type | | | | | | |
| One-person | 2,635 | 42 | 58 | 12 | 8 | 4 |
| Couples with and without children | 6,039 | 80 | 20 | 12 | 9 | 4 |
| Lone parents | 561 | 36 | 64 | 22 | 9 | 14 |
| Other | 1,265 | 71 | 29 | 23 | 10 | 14 |
| Adjusted after-tax income quintiles | | | | | | |
| Lowest | 2,101 | 40 | 60 | 21 | 12 | 11 |
| Second | 2,102 | 61 | 39 | 15 | 9 | 6 |
| Middle | 2,099 | 73 | 27 | 14 | 10 | 5 |
| Fourth | 2,099 | 78 | 22 | 12 | 8 | 5 |
| Highest | 2,100 | 85 | 15 | 8 | 6 | F |

* Components will not add to total because responses are not mutually exclusive.

F Too unreliable to be published.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Household Spending, 2000.

owners with a mortgage lived in housing that needed major repairs.⁴

Condition and size problems often tied to affordability

Household income⁵ played an important role in determining the level of ownership. For example, only 40% of households in the lowest income quintile owned their homes, compared with 85% in the highest. Ownership rates for one-person households and lone parents were significantly lower than rates for couples and other households. Thus, only 28% of single-adult households in the lowest income quintile owned their homes compared with 55% of couples and other households. Even in the highest quintile, ownership

rates for single-adult households (66%) were much lower than for couples and other households (90%).

Overall, households spent roughly one-fifth (21%) of their after-tax income on housing. Households in accommodation below the condition or size norms tended to spend a higher-than-average percentage of their income on their homes, and were over two-and-a-half times more likely to be in the lowest income group (21%) than in the highest (8%).

Renters spent an average 28% of their income on shelter, and yet 19% of them lived in housing in need of major repairs or of unsuitable size. The same is true of female lone-parent families and of households in the lowest

income quintile; roughly one in four of these households lived in sub-standard housing, despite spending about one-third of their income on accommodation. This suggests that they were not in a position to improve their situation. However, not all households with high housing expenditure ratios lived in poor-quality housing. For example, women living alone also spent almost one-third of their after-tax income on housing, but only one in ten lived in sub-standard dwellings.

Higher costs and sub-standard conditions more common to lower-income households⁶

On average, tenants spent a greater proportion of their income on housing costs than owners, as the majority were in the two lowest income groups. When renters and owners in the same income group are compared, owners with a mortgage spent a slightly higher proportion of their income on shelter.⁷ The burden of housing cost for households in all quintiles was considerably reduced if the dwelling was mortgage-free.

Assuming that low-income households have fewer housing choices, one might expect to find this group more vulnerable to substandard or overcrowded housing. In 2000, 11% of households lived in a low-income

4. These data do not separate the households that could improve their housing conditions from those that cannot.

5. Household income was adjusted to account for household size, the presence of children, and the contributions of part-year household members in order to compare all households on a common income basis.

6. The definition of "low-income household" used here was developed specifically for this paper.

7. But even within the same income quintile, owners with a mortgage had a slightly higher median adjusted after-tax income than tenants, except for the highest quintile.

% of households



Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Household Spending, 2000.

situation,⁸ of which one in four lived in a dwelling needing major repairs or that was unsuitable in size; the rate was approximately one in eight for other households. Separated out by the reason the housing was inadequate, low-income households were three times more likely than others to have an insufficient number of bedrooms, and one-and-a-half times more likely to live in a dwelling in poor repair.

Low-income households that owned their homes mortgage-free spent 28% of their after-tax income on housing. However, almost three-quarters of low-income households were renters (compared with just over one-quarter of other households). Low-income tenants who were not occupying government-subsidized housing spent 48% of their after-tax income on shelter, while those who were subsidized spent 31%.

Factoring in choice

Some households spend a high proportion of their income on housing because they prefer to have a larger house or to live in a particular neighbourhood; others wish to pay off the mortgage as quickly as possible. In contrast, other households may want to reduce their housing expenditures but simply cannot — their choices are limited by the availability of affordable housing suited to their needs. The housing market has in fact changed during the last two decades. Investments in social housing diminished dramatically between 1985 and 1997,⁹ and construction of private rental dwellings fell, all contributing to fewer available rental units. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the average rental vacancy rate in metropolitan centres fell from just over 4% in 1996 to little more than 1% in 2001.

Summary

The majority of Canadian households owned the dwelling they lived in, but ownership rates varied depending on their income. Most households lived in housing that was in good condition and suitable in size, and spent, on average, one-fifth of their after-tax income on shelter costs. Dwellings that were in poor condition or too small for the resident family were often tied to inadequate household income. The majority of low-income households rented their homes, and those with government subsidies had a significantly smaller housing cost burden. Owning a house mortgage-free reduced the housing costs of low-income households and older households. Generally, one-person households and lone-parent families were more likely to have high housing costs relative to their income; they were also more likely to experience housing condition or size problems stemming from their high proportion in the lowest income group.

8. Of these low-income households, almost one-half were one-person households and one-sixth lone-mother households.
9. Cooper, M. 2001. "Housing affordability: A children's issue." Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) discussion paper, no. F/11. Ottawa: CPRN.



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Motherhood and paycheques

by Marie Drolet

This article has been adapted from "Wives, Mothers and Wages: Does Timing Matter?" Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series No. 186, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019MIE2002186, available on the Statistics Canada Web site at www.statcan.ca.

Current trends in marriage and fertility patterns suggest that young Canadian women are delaying having families while they concentrate on developing their careers. In 1979, the average age of women at their first marriage was 22; by 1996 it had increased to 27. A comparable trend exists in the fertility

patterns of Canadian women. In 1970, the fertility rate (the average number of live births per woman) was 2.3; by 1993, the rate had declined to 1.7.

At the same time, the labour force participation rate among married women aged 25 to 44 increased from 50% in 1976 to 78% in 1998. Family commitments, however, may limit

women's participation in the labour force and result in different work histories for women than men. Women with children are more likely to work part-time, for example. This study uses data from the 1998 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics to first examine the effects of motherhood on the wages of Canadian women and then whether



Mothers born before 1960 earn less than other mothers

| | All women | | Women born before 1948 | | Women born between 1948 and 1960 | | Women born after 1960 | |
|--|-----------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | Children | No children | Children | No children | Children | No children | Children | No children |
| Average | | | | | | | | |
| Hourly wage rate | \$15.61 | \$15.87 | \$15.39 | \$18.93 | \$16.47 | \$19.17 | \$14.41 | \$14.38 |
| Age | 42 | 33 | 55 | 54 | 44 | 43 | 32 | 28 |
| Number of years of schooling | 14 | 15 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 14 | 15 |
| Years of potential work experience | 24 | 13 | 37 | 34 | 24 | 22 | 12 | 7 |
| Actual years of full-time, full-year work experience | 16 | 12 | 23 | 31 | 18 | 21 | 9 | 7 |
| Percentage of potential work experience spent working full-year, full-time | 68 | 87 | 63 | 89 | 73 | 94 | 77 | 96 |

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1998.

mothers' wages are affected by the age at which they have children.

Does motherhood affect women's wages?

In 1998, women with children spent less time working full-year, full-time (68% of their years of potential work experience) than women without children (87% of their years of potential work experience).¹ At the same time, the average hourly wages of mothers were 2% less, overall, than those of women who did not have children.

When comparing the wages of mothers and non-mothers by age group, the differences between them were much higher for older women. For women born before 1948, those who had no children had an average hourly wage rate in 1998 that was 23% greater than those who had children. For women born between 1948 and 1960, the difference was 16%, but for women born after 1960, the wage gap had largely disappeared. In 1998,

the average hourly wage rate for this youngest group of women was \$14.38 for those without children and \$14.41 for those with children.

At the same time, with each successive generation of women, the proportion of potential work experience spent working full-year, full-time increased for mothers. Mothers born prior to 1948 spent 63% of their years of potential work experience working full-year, full-time compared to 73% for mothers born between 1948 and 1960, and 77% for those born after 1960.

Delaying motherhood makes for higher wages

A significant portion of real lifetime earnings growth occurs during the first years after graduation,² which often coincide with decisions regarding marriage and children. The timing of labour force withdrawals related to children, then, may have important long-run implications for the earnings of women. In other words, the *timing*

of family formation may affect women's earnings.

In 1998, the average hourly wages of women who delayed having children were 17% higher than those who had children early. Part of this variation is due to the differences in the labour force history of women who postpone family formation. Compared with women who had children early, women who delayed childbirth had averaged roughly 1.7 more years of full-year, full-time work experience, and a larger proportion (77% versus 66%) of their years of potential work experience was spent working full-year, full-time. A similar pattern is observed for the various age cohorts. For each cohort, the average hourly

1. Years of potential work experience is defined as age minus number of years of schooling minus five.

2. Murphy, K. and F. Welsh. 1990. "Empirical Age-Earnings Profiles." *Journal of Labour Economics* 8, 2: 202-289.



Delaying motherhood is good for the paycheque

| Had children: | Mothers born before 1948 | | | Mothers born between 1948 and 1960 | | | Mothers born after 1960 | | | All mothers | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------|---------|---------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | Early | On time | Delayed | Early | On time | Delayed | Early | On time | Delayed | Early | On time | Delayed |
| Average | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hourly wage rate | \$14.42 | \$15.96 | \$16.89 | \$14.79 | \$15.71 | \$16.34 | \$15.47 | \$16.74 | \$17.64 | \$12.39 | \$15.25 | \$16.16 |
| Age | 42 | 42 | 42 | 55 | 55 | 55 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 31 | 32 | 33 |
| Number of years of schooling | 13 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 14 |
| Years of potential work experience | 23 | 22 | 22 | 37 | 37 | 36 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 12 | 11 | 13 |
| Actual years of full-time, full-year work experience | 15 | 15 | 17 | 23 | 21 | 25 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 8 | 9 | 11 |
| Percentage of potential work experience spent working full-year, full-time | 66 | 70 | 77 | 63 | 57 | 67 | 68 | 75 | 80 | 66 | 80 | 86 |

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1998.

The concept of "delaying motherhood" refers to the difference between a mother's actual age at the birth of her first child and an average age for giving birth for the first time. It is calculated by taking into account factors such as education level, major field of study, urban size and birth year of the mother. **Delaying** children refers to postponing the birth of the first child for at least one full year *after* the predicted age for having children. Having children **early** refers to having children at least one full year *before* the predicted age for the birth of a first child.

wages and full-year, full-time employment of women who delayed family formation were greater than that of women who had children early. While the wage advantage of mothers who delayed parenthood persisted after the birth of their first child, it decreased as their children grew older.

When differences in work experience are taken into account along with other factors,³ women who delayed having children earned at least 6% more than women who had children early. However, the size of the gap differs depending on the age of the mother. The timing of motherhood seemed to have had little impact on the wages of older mothers. However, the wages of young mothers (those born after 1960) who postponed motherhood were at least 10% higher than the wages of those who had children early.

Why the wage gap?

There are several possible reasons for the wage gap between mothers who interrupted their careers early to have children and those who waited until later. As noted earlier, the wage gap between mothers who delayed having children and those who had children early was greatest among younger women. This may reflect changes in the types of careers available to women born at different times. For example, from 1971 to 1991, the

number of women working in previously male-dominated fields such as management, natural sciences, engineering and mathematics grew considerably. Also, wage growth and promotion opportunities are substantial early in one's career; if women miss this stage due to child-raising, they may not recover. Women who postpone childbirth may be leaving the work force at a time when interruptions are less critical for their careers, and consequently may have higher wages in the longer run.

Furthermore, women who do not have children early in their careers may be more flexible about making decisions concerning training, promotions, travel and other factors that affect job advancement. Those who have children early may find their choices more restricted because of family commitments. Additionally, it is worthwhile to consider that women who postpone children may be inherently more career-oriented and/or may have had higher wages at the beginning of their careers than those women who had children early.

Summary

Current trends in marriage and fertility patterns suggest that young Canadian women are delaying family formation and concentrating on developing their careers. The timing

of motherhood appears to have a significant bearing on the wages of Canadian women. The work experience of women who postpone motherhood is different from that of women who have children early: in 1998, women who postponed having a family averaged roughly 1.7 more years of full-year, full-time work experience, and spent a larger proportion of potential years working full-year and full-time.

The wages of women who postponed motherhood were also different from those of women who had children early. Women who had postponed having children until later in life earned at least 6% more in 1998 than women who had their children early. This observation takes into account important differences in work histories and education.

3. A variety of wage-determining characteristics were used in the analysis, including actual labour market experience, education, field of study, part-time status, region, and urban class size.



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Studying and working: The busy lives of students with paid employment

by Sandra Franke¹

This article is an adaptation of the forthcoming Statistics Canada publication *Transition from School to Paid Work: Event to process*.

The passage from school to paid work used to follow a relatively simple path — education, career and subsequent lifestyle were closely linked. Since the 1980s, however, this path has become more complex as a result of profound changes in the labour market (for example, employment instability, highly specialized work, non-traditional jobs) as well as rising tuition fees and higher student debt.² In addition, the incomes of young Canadians — unlike those of older people — have decreased steadily over the past 20 years, diminishing their ability to become independent.³

These circumstances give rise to new school-to-work transitions. Researchers estimate that the transition now takes approximately eight years to complete,⁴ and includes alternating periods of attending school and working at a paid job, or working and studying at

the same time.⁵ How do young people manage to juggle the myriad of activities they engage in during their transition to self-sufficiency? They study, play sports, hang out with friends, and take time for their personal and family life. Many also hold down part-time jobs.

Much has been written about the consequences of working for pay while in school, such as stress, time spent on homework, academic achievement, absenteeism and the risk of dropping out. Most studies claim that employment starts having a negative effect at 15 to 20 hours per week.⁶ Some researchers have called for a public debate on the regulation of paid work hours for students, while others argue that such a solution may encourage students to abandon their studies in order to become financially self-sufficient.⁷ Using data from the 1998 General Social Survey (GSS), this

article examines what happens to the time use of young people when they add a job to their daily schedule.

About 15% of young Canadians combine school and work

In 1998, approximately half of young Canadians aged 15 to 29 had finished their education and completed their transition to the labour market. Just under one-quarter were students who did not work for pay.⁸ A considerable proportion (14% of women and 9% of men) had left school, but did not have a job. Approximately 15% had started their transition to the working world by combining paid work and school.⁹ Male high school students were more likely to have paid jobs than their female counterparts, while the opposite was true of postsecondary students. In general, male students also devoted more time to paid work.¹⁰



Data for this article come from the 1998 General Social Survey (GSS), which provides information on the time use and quality of life indicators for a sample of 1,376 young women and 1,195 young men between the ages of 15 and 29. The analysis focuses on the partial school-to-work transition in which young people work for pay but their main activity is studying.

Because young people experience a variety of significant life transitions, the study population was restricted in order to better isolate the school-to-work transition. For example, those living with a conjugal partner and those with children have been excluded from the analysis and no distinction was made between those living with their parents and those who had already left the parental home.¹ Lastly, the school-to-work transition from high school is restricted to those aged 15 to 24 but at the postsecondary level encompasses those aged 15 to 29.

1. It should be noted, however, that preliminary analysis revealed that this event appears to intensify most of the effects that can be attributed to the transition to paid work, primarily because the transition to self-sufficiency usually involves an increase in the number of paid working hours.

Male high school students reduce leisure time, while female students sleep less to accommodate a paid job

Young people whose primary activity is attending high school devote, on average, over 4 hours a day to their education and between 7 and 8 hours to entertainment. Women spend about half an hour less per day than men on leisure, and about half an hour more on unpaid work. Compared with other age groups, high school students have quite a lot of time for personal care, including sleeping for 9 hours a night.

Needless to say, adding a paid job to high school studies has a considerable impact on a student's time. Among those with paid employment, male students spend a daily average of over one hour more than female students on their jobs (1.9 hours versus 0.7 hours per day). To accommodate their entry into the labour market, male high school students reduce their daily leisure time by 1.5 hours,

while female students sleep about one hour less. However, both sexes devote nearly the same amount of time to productive activities (paid work, unpaid work and studies), since female high school students do about half an hour more unpaid work — for a total of 1.4 hours per day — than their male counterparts.

The number of working hours impacts on students' lives

"Light" paid jobs of 15 or fewer hours per week do not appear to drastically change the time high school students spend on their studies; however both male and female students sleep about one hour less per day and male students also cut back their daily leisure time by over one hour. Leisure time for female students does not change, although they substitute over one hour of TV-watching for other types of activities. A more demanding job (over 15 hours per week) reduces sleep time for high school women

(1 hour less) and cuts down on leisure activities for both sexes. Both women and men spend less time watching television (about 1.5 hours less for women and 1 hour less for men) and women eliminate nearly all sports from their schedule.

By most life quality measures, high school students are not highly time-stressed. Close to 5 hours per day, or 70% of their leisure time, is spent on activities such as watching television and socializing. Yet few admit to having free time during the day.

Working at a paid job while attending high school appears to have different effects on young women than on young men. For example, young women are more likely to have less time and to feel rushed; they report being less satisfied with their free time, and are over twice as likely as young men to worry about not spending enough time with family and friends. In contrast, working while pursuing high school studies has a positive influence on the quality of male high school students' lives. These young men are more likely to say they are happy and satisfied with their life in general, and are also more likely to be satisfied with their finances and studies.¹¹

Male and female postsecondary students have similar time use patterns

The time use patterns of college and university men and women with paid employment are very similar, a situation that occurs relatively rarely in other realms of life. For example, both male and female postsecondary students devote approximately 2 hours per day to their paid work and about 5 hours to educational pursuits. To accommodate a paid job, male and female students alike reduce their time spent on personal care by about half an hour per day. Young men also decrease their greater amount of leisure time by 1.5 hours, mainly by

| | Women | | | Men | | |
|------------------------------|--------|------|------------|--------|------|------------|
| | No job | Job | Difference | No job | Job | Difference |
| Average hours per day | | | | | | |
| High school | | | | | | |
| <i>Time spent on:</i> | | | | | | |
| Personal care | 11.2 | 10.3 | -0.9 | 10.9 | 10.5 | -0.4 |
| Leisure | 6.8 | 6.5 | -0.3 | 7.7 | 6.2 | -1.5 |
| Paid work | 0.2 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 1.9 | 1.8 |
| Education | 4.4 | 4.8 | 0.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 0.0 |
| Unpaid work | 1.4 | 1.7 | 0.3 | 0.9 | 1.1 | 0.2 |
| Postsecondary | | | | | | |
| <i>Time spent on:</i> | | | | | | |
| Personal care | 10.1 | 9.4 | -0.7 | 10.1 | 9.4 | -0.7 |
| Leisure | 5.3 | 5.5 | 0.2 | 6.2 | 7.0 | 0.8 |
| Paid work | 0.4 | 2.6 | 2.2 | 0.8 | 2.3 | 1.5 |
| Education | 6.4 | 5.1 | -1.3 | 4.8 | 5.1 | 0.3 |
| Unpaid work | 1.8 | 1.6 | -0.2 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 0.3 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

cutting out socializing and sports. Finally, both men and women spend a total of 8.4 hours per day on productive activities (paid work, unpaid work and studies), resulting in busier days than if they spent their time on school work only.

Being employed in a job with "light" hours (20 hours per week or less) does not have a major effect on the way postsecondary women students divide up their time. Men, however, lose some leisure time (particularly sports, which fell by approximately 0.5 hours per day). Nonetheless, young men continue to enjoy more leisure time than young women, including watching an extra half-hour of television per day.

When a postsecondary student takes on a more demanding job (more than 20 hours per week), the impact is greater, but different for the two sexes. Women students cut the time they spend on their studies from 6.4 hours per day to 2.9 hours and eliminate practically all their active

leisure pursuits. Male students with similar work hours experience a dramatic drop in leisure time — almost 4 hours per day — by cutting back on sports and other active leisure but mainly by slashing time spent on social activities and watching television.

Male postsecondary students much happier with their studies than they were in high school

Young men are more likely to be satisfied with their studies when they reach the postsecondary level — 28% in postsecondary versus 18% in high school — but women are no more pleased than they were in high school (approximately 30%). However, a busier schedule in college or university results in increased stress levels from high school days. Young women reported feeling higher levels of time stress than young men: 43% versus 24%.

Somewhat surprisingly, adding a job to postsecondary studies does not seem

to affect perceptions of time pressure or quality of life for either sex. Neither male nor female students are more likely to feel severely time-crunched, rushed or stressed because of their busier schedule. Perhaps this is because the overwhelming majority of young women and men reported that school, rather than work, was their primary source of stress. In fact, having paid work appeared to contribute to a better quality of life, particularly in the case of young men. Male postsecondary students with paid work reported higher self-esteem, more happiness and greater life satisfaction than did those without paid work. As in high school, having a job does not appear to be as beneficial to young women as to young men.

Summary

Working while being a student does not consist solely of substituting study hours for paid work. Other activities are also rescheduled. Most often, time is shaved from sleep and

ERRATA

Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-008-XPE
Canadian Social Trends, Spring 2003

The table on page 24 should read as follows:

Female high school students with a paid job spend more time on education than those without a job

| | Women | | | Men | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------|------------|--------|------|------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | No job | Job | Difference | No job | Job | Difference | | | | | | |
| | Average hours per day | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High school | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Time spent on:</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal care | 11.2 | 10.3 | -0.9 | 10.9 | 10.5 | -0.4 | | | | | | |
| Leisure | 6.8 | 6.5 | -0.3 | 7.7 | 6.2 | -1.5 | | | | | | |
| Paid work | 0.2 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 1.9 | 1.8 | | | | | | |
| Education | 4.4 | 4.8 | 0.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 0.0 | | | | | | |
| Unpaid work | 1.4 | 1.7 | 0.3 | 0.9 | 1.1 | 0.2 | | | | | | |
| Postsecondary | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Time spent on:</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal care | 10.1 | 9.4 | -0.7 | 10.1 | 9.4 | -0.7 | | | | | | |
| Leisure | 5.3 | 5.5 | 0.2 | 7.0 | 5.6 | 0.8 | | | | | | |
| Paid work | 0.4 | 2.6 | 2.2 | 0.8 | 2.3 | 1.5 | | | | | | |
| Education | 6.4 | 5.1 | -1.3 | 4.8 | 5.1 | 0.3 | | | | | | |
| Unpaid work | 1.8 | 1.6 | -0.2 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 0.3 | | | | | | |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998.

leisure, including physical activities. Moreover, quality of life issues also emerge, with different effects on men and women.

The various realities experienced by today's young Canadians have important implications for the education sector. This is all the more true since the transition to the labour market increasingly encroaches on other important life transitions, such as leaving home, union formation or having children. There are also important health issues related to the stress and to the effects of schedule conflicts on sleeping patterns and levels of physical activity that young people experience.



Sandra Franke is an analyst with Health Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

Endnotes

3. Young people, particularly men, now live with their parents longer. Boyd, M. and D. Norris. Spring 1999. "The Crowded Nest: Young Adults at Home." *Canadian Social Trends*. p. 2-5.
4. In 1998, the transition process was believed to start at the age of 16 and end at around 23. Statistics Canada. Autumn 1999. "Youths and the labour market, 1998-99." *Labour Force Update* 3, 4 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 71-005-XPB). However, the student population is ageing. Students 25 years and up now represent one-quarter of full-time students in Canada. Sales et al., 2001: 168.
5. The number of working hours per week has been increasing among adolescents since the late 1980s, unlike among other age groups. Furthermore, working hours are continually added to time spent on studying. "Working Teens." *Canadian Social Trends*. Winter 1994. p. 18-22. More and more students consider paid work as part of their lifestyle and not just one of their activities. Sales et al., 2001: 180.
6. Stone, J.R. and J.T. Mortimer. 1998. "The Effect of Adolescent Employment on Vocational Development: Public and Educational Policy Implications." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 53 : 184-214. p. 199; Wegman, D.H. and L.K. Davis. 1999. "Protecting Youth at Work." *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 36: 579-583; *Canadian Social Trends*. Winter 1994.
7. Statistics Canada, 1999: 20.
8. Students are defined as those who declared studies as their main activity, even if on a part-time basis (the proportion of which is low).
9. The GSS does not distinguish between summer jobs and jobs held during the school year.
10. This may in part explain why men delay pursuing postsecondary studies longer than women: only 27% of men at the college or university level are under 20 years of age, compared with 38% of women.
11. The sample size for questions on quality of life were too small to permit analysis based on the number of hours of paid work.

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University tuition fees

Average tuition fees continue to rise more quickly than inflation. In the 2002-03 academic year, undergraduate students paid an average \$3,738, 4% more than in 2001-02. Graduate students faced fee increases twice as high as undergraduates, up 11% to an average of \$4,993. Since 1997-98, tuition for graduate programs has risen over 11% annually, compared with 6% for undergraduate programs. The most expensive programs continue to be dentistry, medicine and law. Dentistry students paid an average \$9,703 in 2002-03, more than double the \$3,608 arts students paid.

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Health status of immigrants

Immigrants are healthier than the Canadian-born population, even after accounting for age differences between the two groups. In 2000-01, 60% of immigrants reported that they had a chronic condition, a rate significantly lower than 65% for the Canadian-born population. Recent male immigrants have lower odds of reporting heart disease than Canadian-born men, although rates for diabetes,

high blood pressure and cancer were no lower for immigrants than for the Canadian-born. The longer immigrants live in Canada, the more their health resembles that of the Canadian-born population. This can not be explained by evolving health behaviours of immigrants, as their habits such as smoking and diet did not closely resemble that of other Canadians, even among immigrants who have lived in Canada for long periods.

Health status and health behaviour among immigrants
Catalogue no. 82-003-SIE



Mental health of Canadians

In 2000-01, 8% of Canadian-born adults aged 15 to 75, but only 6% of immigrants, reported having at least one major episode of depression in the previous year. Similarly, over 2% of the Canadian-born reported having experiences with alcohol dependence but only 0.5% of immigrants did so. This "healthy immigrant effect" was strongest among recent immigrants: those from Asia had the lowest rates of depression and those from Africa had the lowest rates of alcohol dependence. These two trends are related, since recent immigrants have tended to come from Asia and Africa. In contrast, immigrants who arrived more than a decade ago, the majority of whom came from Europe, have similar rates of depression as the Canadian-born population.

Mental health of Canada's immigrants
Catalogue no. 82-003-SIE



Computer access at school and at home

In 2000, 15-year-old Canadian students ranked among the highest in the world in terms of access to computers. Nearly 9 in 10 had a PC at home and 7 in 10 had access to the Internet from home. However, boys were more likely than girls to have a home computer available, and students whose parents had a higher level of education were most likely to have a home PC and Internet connection. Over three-quarters of 15-year-old students have access to computers at school almost every day or a few times a week, and 80% of these school computers are hooked up to the Internet. However, students were much more likely to use computers frequently at home (70%) than at school (39%).

Education quarterly review
vol. 8, no. 4
Catalogue nos. 81-003-XIE,
81-003-XPB



Childhood obesity

An estimated 37% of Canadian children aged 2 to 11 were overweight in 1998-99; of these, about half could be considered obese. More boys than girls were too heavy: 35% of girls and 38% of boys, with 17% of girls and 19% of boys classified as obese. The proportion of children with weight problems dropped as family income increased. Obese children's overall

activity levels were considerably different from both normal weight and overweight children. Fewer obese children (38%) were active compared with non-obese children (47%).

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Impact of income on mortality in urban Canada, 1971 to 1996

The gap in life expectancy at birth between the poorest and richest neighbourhoods in Canada's urban areas narrowed substantially from 1971 to 1996. In 1971, compared with people in urban neighbourhoods in the lowest income quintile, people in neighbourhoods in the highest quintile could expect to live an additional 6 years (for men) and nearly 3 years (for women). By 1996, the gap was down to 5 years and less than 2 years, respectively. Rates of infant mortality and the probability of survival to age 75 improved for all income groups from 1971 to 1996. In addition, socio-economic disparities fell markedly over time for most causes of death. However, a few, such as lung cancer for females, showed clearly widening disparities.

Trends in mortality by neighbourhood income in urban Canada, 1971 to 1996
Catalogue no. 82-003-SIE

SOCIAL INDICATORS

| | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| INCOME¹ | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Average market income</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Economic families ¹ | 53,204 | 53,447 | 53,640 | 55,248 | 57,913 | 59,000 | 61,634 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 20,302 | 20,710 | 20,329 | 20,409 | 21,316 | 22,630 | 23,252 | -- |
| <i>Average total income (includes transfer payments)</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Economic families ¹ | 60,784 | 60,729 | 61,133 | 62,594 | 65,172 | 65,911 | 68,318 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 26,110 | 26,139 | 25,588 | 25,687 | 26,568 | 27,610 | 28,124 | -- |
| <i>Average income tax</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Economic families ¹ | 11,969 | 12,051 | 12,013 | 12,387 | 13,095 | 12,757 | 13,592 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 4,717 | 4,726 | 4,542 | 4,468 | 4,792 | 5,110 | 5,169 | -- |
| <i>Average after-tax income</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Economic families ¹ | 48,814 | 48,678 | 49,121 | 50,207 | 52,077 | 53,154 | 54,725 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 21,393 | 21,413 | 21,046 | 21,219 | 21,775 | 22,500 | 22,955 | -- |
| <i>Average after-tax income by quintiles for families</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Lowest quintile | 18,868 | 18,821 | 18,179 | 18,206 | 18,920 | 19,655 | 19,844 | -- |
| 2 nd | 32,823 | 32,429 | 32,076 | 32,360 | 33,374 | 34,573 | 35,159 | -- |
| 3 rd | 44,604 | 43,916 | 44,403 | 44,819 | 46,209 | 47,249 | 48,211 | -- |
| 4 th | 57,969 | 57,537 | 58,348 | 59,369 | 61,350 | 62,868 | 64,354 | -- |
| Highest quintile | 89,815 | 90,696 | 92,606 | 96,323 | 100,587 | 101,440 | 106,083 | -- |
| <i>Earnings ratios (full-year, full-time workers)</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Dual-earners as % of husband-wife families | 60.3 | 60.5 | 61.3 | 63.0 | 63.4 | 63.8 | 65.0 | -- |
| Women's earnings as % of men's (full-year, full-time workers) | 69.7 | 73.0 | 72.8 | 69.2 | 72.1 | 69.4 | 71.7 | -- |
| <i>Prevalence (%) of low income after tax (1992 low income cut-offs)</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Families with head aged 65 and over | 2.5 | 2.1 | 3.0 | 3.8 | 3.6 | 2.7 | 2.9 | -- |
| Families with head less than 65 | 10.6 | 11.3 | 11.9 | 11.2 | 9.6 | 9.5 | 8.7 | -- |
| Two-parent families with children | 8.3 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 9.3 | 7.4 | 7.6 | 7.4 | -- |
| Lone-parent families | 42.1 | 42.5 | 45.3 | 41.3 | 35.5 | 34.3 | 30.2 | -- |
| Unattached individuals | 30.7 | 30.6 | 33.7 | 33.0 | 30.5 | 30.4 | 28.6 | -- |
| FAMILIES^{2,3} | | | | | | | | |
| Marriage rate (per 1,000 population) | 5.5 | 5.5 | 5.3 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 5.0 | 5.0 | -- |
| Crude divorce rate (per 1,000 population) | 2.7 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 | -- |
| Total number of families ('000) | 7,778 | 7,876 | 7,975 | 8,039 | 8,093 | 8,142 | 8,194 | 8,277 |
| % of all families | | | | | | | | |
| Husband-wife families | 86.1 | 85.8 | 85.5 | 85.2 | 84.9 | 84.6 | 84.2 | 83.9 |
| with children | 51.1 | 50.9 | 50.6 | 50.4 | 50.1 | 49.9 | 49.7 | 49.4 |
| without children | 35.0 | 34.9 | 34.9 | 34.8 | 34.7 | 34.7 | 34.6 | 34.5 |
| Lone-parent families | 13.9 | 14.2 | 14.5 | 14.8 | 15.1 | 15.4 | 15.8 | 16.1 |
| % of husband-wife families | | | | | | | | |
| with children | 60.2 | 60.2 | 59.2 | 59.1 | 59.1 | 59.0 | 59.0 | 59.0 |
| all children under 18 | 66.2 | 65.8 | 65.4 | 65.0 | 64.6 | 64.2 | 63.8 | 63.4 |
| Females as % of lone-parent families | 82.8 | 83.0 | 83.1 | 83.2 | 83.3 | 83.4 | 83.4 | 83.6 |

1. All incomes are in 2000 constant dollars and all years are adjusted to 1996 census weights. An economic family consists of two or more people who live in the same dwelling and are related by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption.

2. Excluding the Territories.

3. A census family is referred to as immediate or nuclear family consisting of married or common-law couples with or without children, or lone parents and their children, whereas a child does not have his or her own spouse residing in the household.

Sources: *Income in Canada* (Catalogue no. 75-202-XPE), *Income Trends in Canada* (Catalogue no. 13F0022-XCB), *Annual Demographic Statistics* (Catalogue no. 91-213-XPB) and *Divorces* (Catalogue no. 84F0213-XPB).

LESSON PLAN

Suggestions for using Canadian Social Trends in the classroom

Lesson plan for "Studying and working: The busy lives of students with paid employment"

Objectives

- To discuss how time spent on paid employment and other activities affects the academic achievements of students
- To compare the experience of your students to that of respondents to the General Social Survey
- To learn how to design a survey on time use.

Methods

1. Develop a time use diary with the class. Decide on duration of time that will constitute an episode (e.g. 5, 10 or 15 minutes); how detailed the activities should be (e.g. should travelling to work be counted as time spent working or a separate category called commuting? is watching a video or DVD in the same category as watching TV or is it a separate category?); whether it's important to record who was with you when you were doing something; any other data you think would be useful to collect.
2. Ask your students to keep the time use diary for a few days or a week.
3. Have them compare their results with those found by the author of "Studying and working."
4. As a class project, create a database linking the number of hours class members work for pay and their marks, and correlate the relationship between marks and hours. Discuss the factors other than hours worked that can affect a student's marks.
5. Discuss the trade-offs that students make, or are willing to make, to accommodate other activities (for example, work time and time with friends).

Using other resources

- Look at the lesson called "Paying off student loans" on the Learning Resources site at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/social/stude1.htm> for a tool to help students understand what may be involved in paying off student loans for their postsecondary education.

Share your ideas!

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Educators

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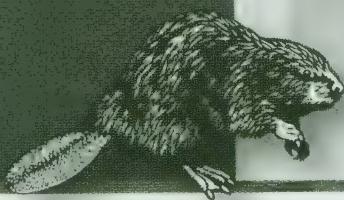
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CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS

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Cover illustrator

Born in Flemington, New Jersey, Tim Zeltner moved to Canada in 1980, where he studied illustration at Sheridan College. He has been illustrating books and magazines for over 15 years. Tim's folk painting style has been recognized by The American Society of Illustrators and Communication Arts. He now lives in Toronto with his wife Jackie.

Couples living apart

by Anne Milan and Alice Peters



Most people want to share an intimate connection with another person but the framework within which relationships occur has changed dramatically. Traditionally, marriage was the only acceptable social institution for couples. In recent decades, however, people have been marrying at increasingly older ages, divorce and separation rates have grown, and living together without marriage has become more common. Now it is not unusual for relationships to form and dissolve and new partnerships to be created over the course of the life cycle.

Previously, social norms prescribed that a couple should marry and live in the same household. When a couple could not live together, it was assumed that the living

arrangement was not ideal and was only temporary.¹ In today's society, unmarried couples who live in separate residences while maintaining an intimate relationship are referred to as non-resident partners or "living apart together" (LAT) couples. This type of relationship may be seen as part of the "going steady" process, often as a prelude to a common-law union or marriage. Alternatively, LAT unions may be viewed as a more permanent

1. Levin, I. and J. Trost. 1999. "Living apart together." *Community, Work and Family* 2, 3: 279-94.

living arrangement by individuals who do not want, or are not able, to share a home. This article uses data from the 2001 General Social Survey to examine the characteristics of individuals in LAT relationships.

One in 12 Canadians "lives apart together"

In 2001, 8% of the Canadian population aged 20 and over were in LAT relationships. LAT arrangements were most common for 20- to 29-year-olds (56%). It is not surprising that many of those in LAT couples are young adults. Individuals are postponing union formation until later than did earlier generations due to uncertain job prospects, the pursuit of higher education, and the "crowded nest" phenomenon,² where adult children return to (or never leave) the parental home. While most young adults eventually enter a union,³ being part of a LAT arrangement may meet their immediate relationship needs.

LATs are not just for the young

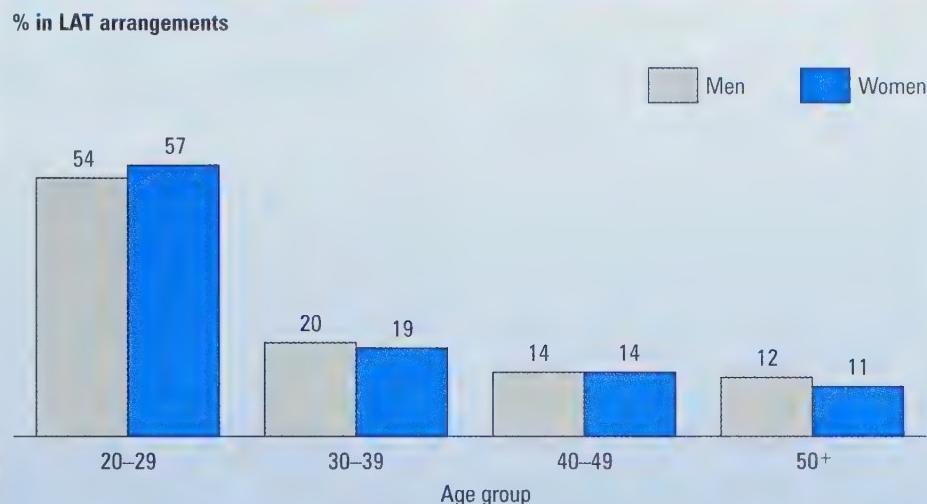
While the majority of those in LAT relationships were young adults, in 2001 44% of people in such unions were aged 30 and over. About one in five (19%) of those in LAT arrangements were in their thirties, 14% were in their forties and the remaining 11% were aged 50 and over. For older individuals, a LAT arrangement may be a way for them to keep their own households and still have a relationship.

Cultural and family expectations affect perceptions of whether it is appropriate for older individuals to marry again after divorce or widowhood. Previous research has found that many older people do not wish to marry their dating partners.⁴ Some believe that maintaining their own homes prevents an unequal division of domestic labour and caregiving while allowing them to retain their independence. Others view their home

CST What you should know about this study

Data in this article come from the 2001 General Social Survey. The survey interviewed a representative sample of over 24,000 Canadians aged 15 years and older, living in private households in the 10 provinces. This particular study is based on a sample of about 2,190 individuals aged 20 and over who were not living with a spouse (married or common-law) at the time of the survey. These respondents were asked, "Are you in an intimate relationship with someone who lives in a separate household?" It is not possible to determine the duration of this type of relationship.

CST Most of those in living apart together (LAT) arrangements are young people



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

as a physical or symbolic base from which to carry out their various social activities with friends, adult children, or grandchildren. In all of these situations, a LAT arrangement could be an alternative to remarriage or cohabitation for seniors. Adults entering their middle years and beyond in the early decades of the 21st century will have experienced a greater diversity of relationship and marital experiences over their lifetimes than did earlier generations.⁵ This may result in an increased share of LAT relationships among older adults in the future.

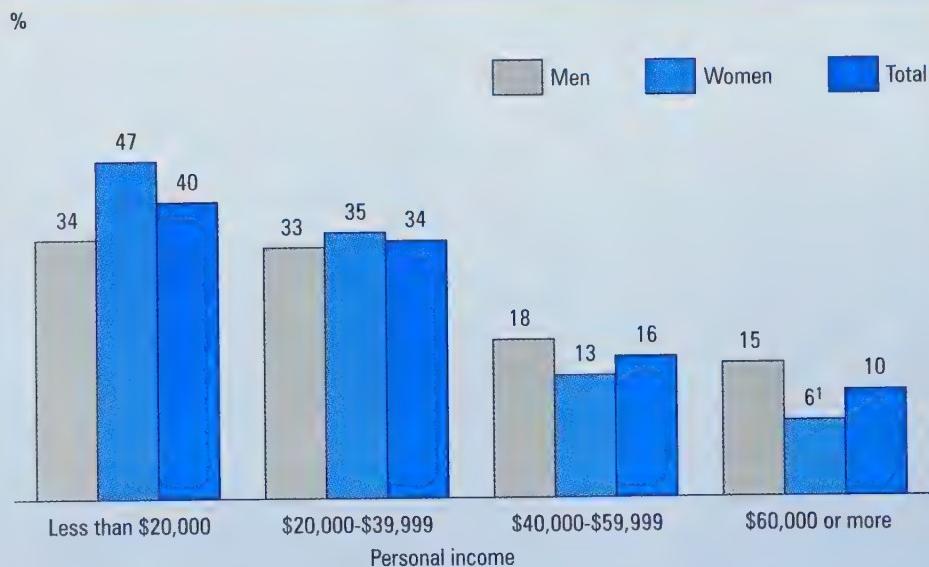
2. See, for example, Boyd, M. and D. Norris. Spring 1999. "The crowded nest: Young adults at home." *Canadian Social Trends*. p. 2-5.
3. Statistics Canada. 2002. *Changing Conjugal Life in Canada* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-576-XIE).
4. Caradec, V. 1997. "Forms of conjugal life among the 'young elderly'." *Population: An English Selection* 9: 47-73.
5. Cooney, T. and K. Dunne. 2001. "Intimate relationships in later life, current realities, future prospects." *Journal of Family Issues* 22, 7: 838-858.

Most people in LATs are in the labour force

The main activity of the majority of LATs aged 30 or more in the year prior to the survey was either working or looking for work. For those aged 30 to 39, 87% were in the labour force, as were 90% of those in their forties. A large share of individuals in their twenties who were in LAT relationships were also in the labour force (62%), while 33% were students. For those individuals aged 50 and older, 54% were in the labour force while 36% were retired.

Given that two households are more expensive to maintain than one, it might be expected that LAT relationships occur more often among those who are financially secure. In some cases, however, there may be social subsidies or income transfers supporting lower income people who do not live with partners, such as widowed seniors or those who have young children. Although it was more pronounced at the lower end of the scale, people at all levels of income were involved in LAT relationships in 2001: 40% had personal incomes below \$20,000, 34% between \$20,000 and \$40,000, 16% between \$40,000 and \$60,000, and 10% had personal incomes greater than \$60,000. This reflects the large proportion of LATs in their twenties who may be either students or who have not been in the labour force for a very long period of time.

Caring for others is a common reason for not living with a partner
 One reason why LAT couples do not share a residence is because they are responsible for the care of other persons.⁶ For example, one or both members of the couple may have children. Not wishing to bring another adult into the household because of the children or having difficulty attracting a live-in partner could be compelling reasons for a LAT relationship. Women are more likely to be



1. High sampling variability.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

lone parents or to retain custody of children following a union dissolution.⁷ In 2001, 23% of women in LAT relationships lived in a household with children, while only 5% of men did so.

Living with and/or having the responsibility of caring for an aging parent could be another reason for a couple to not co-reside. In 2001, 36% of those in LAT relationships lived with a parent or parents (38% of men and 34% of women). While many young adults might live with their parents in order to save expenses, older individuals who share a home with their parents are likely providing some form of parental care. An earlier study found that the responsibility for eldercare has shifted from institutions to families. In 1996, 2.1 million Canadians looked after older family members; two-thirds were between the ages of 30 and 59.⁸

According to one study, two-thirds (66%) of members in LAT couples claim their living separately is due to external pressures, usually family- or work-related; 34% report it is in order

to retain their independence.⁹ In these cases, a LAT relationship is a viable alternative to bringing another person into the household. These individuals may prefer to stay in familiar surroundings, continue their responsibilities for children or parents, or work, all while maintaining an intimate relationship.

Although many LATs share a home with other family members, overall, roughly one-third lived alone (28% of women and 38% of men), and the proportion increased with age. In

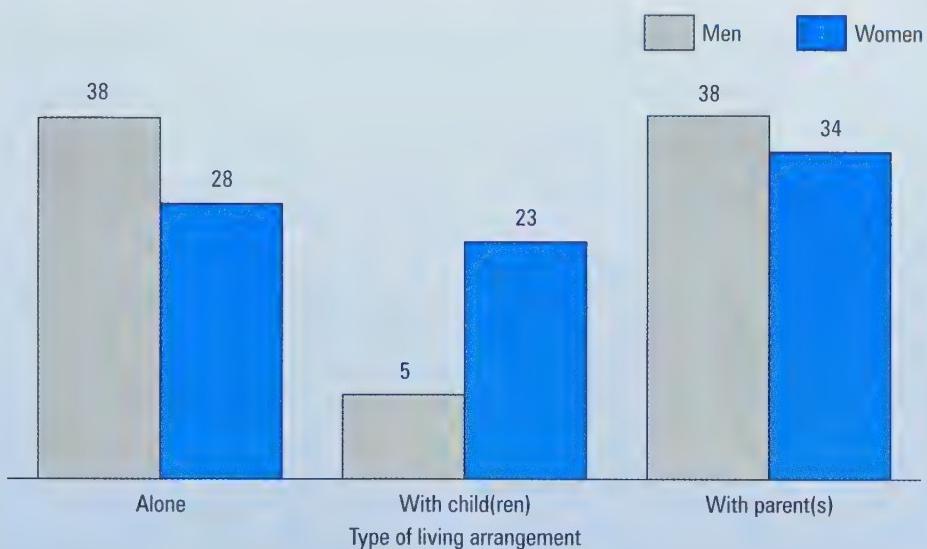
6. Levin and Trost.

7. Statistics Canada. 2002. *Family History* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-575-XIE); Statistics Canada. 2002. *Divorces* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 84F0213XPB).

8. Frederick, J.A. and J.E. Fast. Autumn 1999. "Eldercare in Canada: Who gives how much?" *Canadian Social Trends*. p. 26-30.

9. Villeneuve-Gokalp, C. September/October 1997. "Vivre en couple chacun chez soi." *Population* 5: 1050-1082.

%



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

2001, about 16% of 20- to 29-year-old men and women in LAT relationships lived alone, with the proportion rising to 79% of men and 72% of women aged 50 and over. Establishing new living arrangements can be stressful for seniors (for example, following widowhood¹⁰). Furthermore, for a couple to move in together requires decisions about where to live and what possessions to keep or share.¹¹

Many LATs would like to live common-law

About one-half of those in a LAT couple, regardless of whether they are men or women, expect to live common-law with their current partners at some future point. The remainder either do not want their relationship to develop further, or else they are undecided. Age also has an impact on the extent to which people in LAT relationships expect to live common-law. While 57% of those aged 20 to 29 in LAT relationships anticipate that their relationship will develop further, the proportion decreases for those aged 30 to 39 (46%), and 40 to 49

(48%), and drops off to 26% for those 50 and older. This is consistent with the finding that older individuals may be more set in their ways and prefer to maintain their own residences while engaging in a relationship.¹²

The expectation of living common-law with their LAT partner also depends on living arrangements. Approximately one-half of females in LAT relationships who were either living in households with children, or with their parent(s), thought they would live in a common-law union at some point with their current LAT partner. A British study found that one-third of never-married, childless women under 35 are in LAT relationships, and about 30% of those women do not plan to live together or get married to their present partner.¹³ The greater participation of women in the labour force and their subsequent financial autonomy may reflect a reduced willingness to commit to a union that could infringe on their existing relationships with family, friends or other social networks. However, only 32%¹⁴ of males in LAT relationships who were living in households with

children thought they would live in a common-law union with their current partner, compared to 60% of males who lived with their parent(s).

LAT relationships are not necessarily "till death do us part"

Those in LAT relationships held somewhat different views on the importance of a lasting relationship than did those who were married or in common-law unions. The proportion of women in LAT relationships, for example, who felt that it is very important to have a lasting relationship for a happy life was lower (62%) than that of women who were living common-law (72%) and women who were married (81%). The results were similar for men: 53% in LAT relationships believed it was very important to have a lasting relationship compared to 64% of men living common-law and 76% of married men. Perhaps not surprisingly, persons who were divorced or separated were least likely to believe that it was very important to have a lasting relationship in order to be happy (34% of women and 39% of men).

Those in LAT relationships were also less likely to feel that it is very important to have at least one child for a happy life than were people in other types of relationships. Only never-married men (25%) and women (29%) were less inclined than those in LAT relationships to believe that having children is very important in

10. Bess, I. Summer 1999. "Widows living alone." *Canadian Social Trends*. p. 2-5.

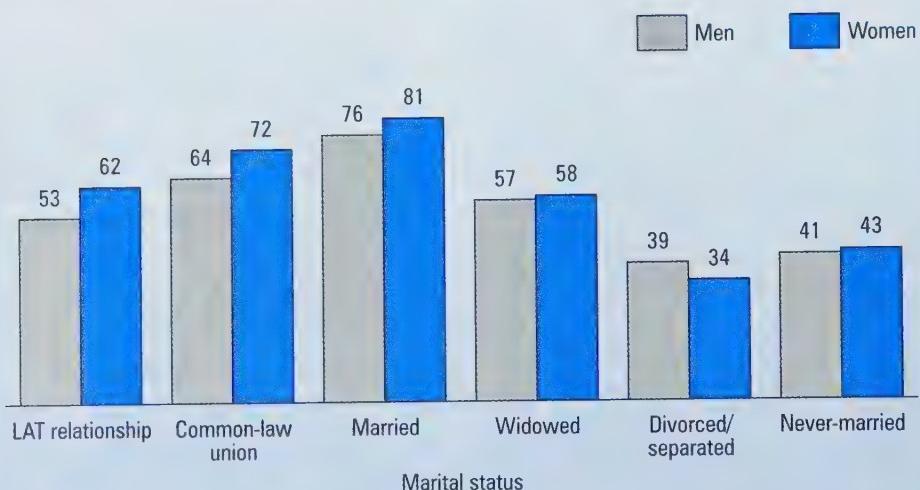
11. Levin and Trost.

12. Caradec.

13. Ermisch, J.F. 2000. *Personal Relationships and Marriage Expectations: Evidence from the 1998 British Household Panel Study*. Colchester, England: Institute for Social and Economic Research.

14. High sampling variability.

% who believe it is very important to have a lasting relationship



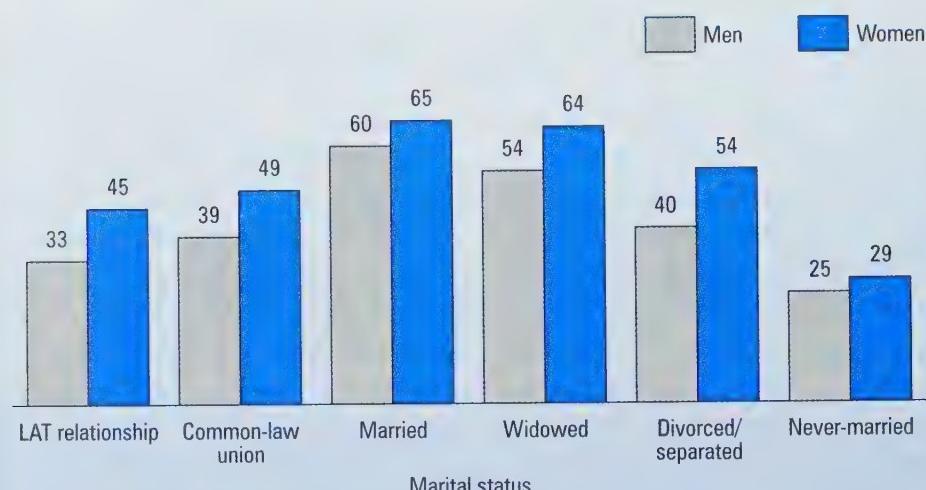
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

never-married. However, older and previously married individuals are also involved in this type of relationship. Labour market changes, higher educational attainment, changing family responsibilities and living arrangements, increased divorce and separation rates, higher standards of living, and higher life expectancy all may contribute to the prevalence of LAT relationships.

For some, being in an intimate relationship with someone from a separate household is a way of respecting the autonomy of each. Living apart could also allow both parties the time to be sure of their commitment to the relationship before proceeding further.¹⁵ Others may have had the experience of living previously in a "traditional" couple, and they now wish to try an alternative arrangement with a new partner. For yet others who care for children or elderly parents, or have educational or employment commitments in different locations, separate homes may be a practical solution while still engaging in a relationship. Regardless of whether it is a temporary or permanent arrangement, "living apart together" is a way for Canadians to balance their needs for independence with their needs for intimacy.

About four in 10 of those in LAT arrangements believe it is very important to have children

% who believe it is very important to have children



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

15. Bawin-Legrow, B. and A. Gauthier. 2001. "Regulation of intimacy and love semantics in couples living apart together." *International Review of Sociology* 11, 1: 39-46.

order to be happy in life. The proportion of women in LAT relationships, for example, who felt that it is very important to have children was lower (45%) than that of women who were living common-law (49%) and women who were married (65%). The results were similar for men: 33% in LAT relationships believed it was very

important to have a child compared to 39% of men living common-law and 60% of married men.

Summary

Being in an intimate relationship with someone from a separate household may be seen as part of the "going steady" process for the young and

Anne Milan and Alice Peters are analysts with *Canadian Social Trends*.

Childfree by choice

by Susan Stobert and Anna Kemeny

"We are a group of adults who all share at least one common desire: we do not wish to have children of our own... We choose to call ourselves 'childfree' rather than 'childless,' because we feel the term 'childless' implies that we're missing something we want — and we are not. We consider ourselves child-FREE — free of the loss of personal freedom, money, time and energy that having children requires."

Thus starts the introductory paragraph of "childfree.net," one of the many Internet sites devoted to providing support and information to individuals who have decided not to have children. Such a support network may be much needed. Although choosing to stay childless may be easier in some ways than it was 30 years ago, having children is still overwhelmingly the norm — 65% of families have children. Those who opt to stay childfree constitute a small minority that often feel obliged to justify their decision to others. It appears that our "kidcentric" society tends to leave those without children feeling inadequate, left out, judged or misunderstood.¹

CST What you should know about this study

Data in this article come from the 2001 General Social Survey (GSS) on family and friends. In addition to providing a wealth of information on various socio-demographic characteristics of individuals and families, the GSS covered topics such as marital history, common-law unions, biological, adopted and stepchildren, leaving the family home and fertility intentions, to name just a few. The survey was conducted between February and December 2001, and interviewed more than 24,000 respondents aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces.

One of the questions respondents were asked is "Are you planning on having children?" It is important to realize, however, that birth intentions are not necessarily the same as subsequent actions. As individuals — particularly women — age, it is not unusual for them to change their minds and decide to enter parenthood after all.

Nonetheless, the trend towards fewer children or no children forges ahead. For a variety of reasons — greater education and higher labour force participation for women, effective birth control, and later marriage to name just a few — the fertility rate has been steadily declining over the past century (with the exception of the baby boom). Indeed, the total fertility rate per woman dropped from 3.5 children in 1921 to 1.5 in 1999.² In addition to women having fewer children, more are not having children at all.

Who are Canada's young childfree adults? Using data from the 2001 General Social Survey (GSS), this article

looks at the socio-demographic characteristics — marital status, religion, country of birth, education and income — of Canadians aged 20 to 34 who intended to stay childfree at the time of the survey. It also examines these individuals' childhood experiences and the

1. www.childfree.net (accessed November 2002); Clausen, C. July/August 2002. "To have or not to have." *Utne Reader*. www.utne.com (accessed November 2002).
2. Bélanger, A. (ed.) 2002. *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-209-XPE). p. 23.

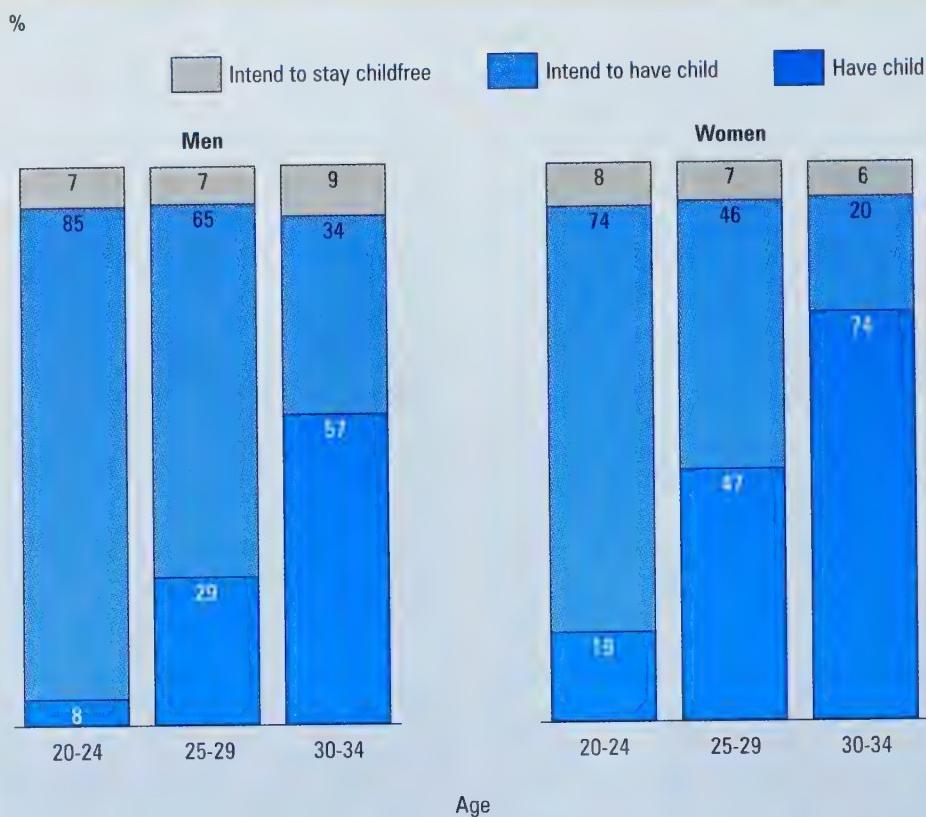
importance they place on marriage, children and career.

Only a small proportion of young Canadians intend to remain childfree

The vast majority of young Canadians report that they intend to have at least one child. In 2001, only 7% of Canadians aged 20 to 34, representing 434,000 individuals, indicated that they did not intend to have children. Although men and women differ in terms of when they become parents — for example, among 30- to 34-year-olds, 72% of women have a child compared with just 54% of men — the proportion not wishing to have children is quite consistent: 7% for women, 8% for men.

While the proportion of Canadians who have children increases with age (18% of 20- to 24-year-olds had one or more children compared with 64% of 30- to 34-year-olds), the percentage of those who do not intend to have any stays surprisingly constant over these 15 years: about 7% and 8% for women and men, respectively. However, between the ages of 20 and 34, the proportion of individuals who do not currently have a child but intend to have one in the future drops markedly from 75% to 27%.

The reasons for not intending to have children are diverse. For some, medical conditions may preclude the possibility. Others, despite never having consciously decided to forego children, may now find themselves in a situation that is not conducive to child rearing, such as not having met the right partner, living with a partner who does not want children, or having a career that is too fulfilling or demanding to allow time for the care of a child. Then there are those who always knew they would not want children. This group includes individuals who simply do not like kids, as well as those who cite religious or environmental reasons for their decision to stay childfree.³



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

While the reasons for not planning a family may result from any of the above points, childlessness arising from medical problems is very rare in this age group; only about 2% of young Canadians reported that either they or their partner could not bear children. It is therefore more likely that 20- to 34-year-olds would plan on having no children because they actively chose not to or because of any number of unanticipated circumstances mentioned earlier.

Nearly one in 10 singles expects to have no children

According to data from the GSS, a clear relationship exists between marital status and fertility intentions. Almost always, single (never-married) individuals are more likely to report that they do not expect to have children than those who are in committed

relationships. In 2001, some 9% of singles reported not expecting to have children compared with 5% of those in a marriage or common-law relationship.

This, of course, is not unexpected. Although parenthood outside of marriage is increasing, and decisions about parenthood and marital status are becoming less interdependent, most childbearing still occurs in a committed relationship. According to Heaton and colleagues, "the practical considerations of caring for children while making a living are most easily resolved in a partnership, and children

3. Cain, M. 2001. *The Childless Revolution: What It Means to be Childless Today*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Perseus Publishing. p. 15-23.

| | % of 20- to 34-year-olds intending to stay childfree |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Total | 7 |
| Men | 8 |
| Women | 7 |
| Married/common-law | 5 |
| Single (never married) | 9 |
| Have religious affiliation | 6 |
| No religious affiliation | 12 |
| Born in Canada | 8 |
| Born outside Canada | 5 |
| University or college degree | 7 |
| High school graduate | 7 |
| Less than high school education | 7 |

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

tend to be better off if they live in a household with two parents.”⁴

Religious Canadians more likely to want children

Religious traditions are generally linked with values and attitudes that support marriage and parenthood. Research shows that there is a positive association between religious participation and traditional attitudes about family formation. For example, data from the 1995 GSS found that weekly attenders of religious services — both men and women — placed greater importance on lasting relationships, being married, and having at least one child than those who never attended.⁵

Indeed, the 2001 GSS confirms that Canadians with no religious affiliation (another measure of religiousness) are more likely not to plan a family than their religious counterparts: Among 20- to 34-year-olds, 12% of those with no religious affiliation expected to stay childfree versus 6% of religious Canadians.

Different cultures give rise to different realities, values and aspirations.

While in many developed countries families have been getting smaller, in several other parts of the world large families are still the norm. Women's roles, economic conditions, religion, social security systems and the availability of effective contraceptives are just a few of the possible factors that may affect fertility. Many of these factors vary from place to place. The decision to have or not to have children does, therefore, depend at least partly on the country where an individual was born. Indeed, according to data from the 2001 GSS, place of birth did make a difference when it came to planning families: 5% of persons born outside Canada reported not intending to have children compared with 8% of their Canadian-born counterparts.

Education, income and the expectation to have children interrelated

The relationship between income, education and childlessness is not straightforward. On the one hand, more educational attainment, and the higher earnings that generally result from it, increase the opportunity cost

(e.g. lost wages) of having children. On the other hand, raising a child is an expensive undertaking; it is estimated that it costs over \$150,000 to raise a child to the age of 18 in Canada and those with greater economic resources can more easily meet these expenses.⁶ Because of these two competing tendencies, the effects of income and education tend to cancel out each other.⁷

According to the 2001 GSS, individuals' level of education did not seem to be associated with their fertility intentions. Whether people aged 20 to 34 were college or university graduates or had a less than high school education, 7% in each group expected not to have children. Those in the middle of the educational spectrum — high school graduates or those with some college or trade school courses — also showed the same trend: 7% intended to stay childfree.

Education also may influence attitudes and behaviours for non-economic reasons, particularly for women. Results of numerous studies indicate that women are likely to delay having children if they pursue academic studies and, likewise, are more likely to delay educational attainment if they become parents. Time constraints tend to inhibit the mutual roles of student and parent; as well, education may alter beliefs about the importance of children and may offer alternative goals, especially for women. In contrast,

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4. Heaton, T., C. Jacobson and K. Holland. May 1999. "Persistence and change in decisions to remain childless." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 61, 2: 533.
 5. Clark, W. Autumn 1998. "Religious observance, marriage and family." *Canadian Social Trends*. p. 2-7.
 6. Vanier Institute of the Family. *Profiling Canada's Families*. Chapter 59. www.vifamily.ca/profiling (accessed December 4, 2002).
 7. Heaton et al. p. 532.

Had a happy childhood

Did not have a happy childhood

Reported being close to their father

Reported not being close to their father

Reported being close to their mother

Reported not being close to their mother

Happiness in life depends on being married

Happiness in life does not depend on being married

Happiness in life depends on being part of a couple

Happiness in life does not depend on being part of a couple

Happiness in life depends on having a child

Happiness in life does not depend on having a child

Happiness in life depends on having a job

Happiness in life does not depend on having a job

% of 20- to 34-year-olds intending to stay childfree

7

9

7

8

7

10

4

15

6

26

1

35

7

5

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

increased earning potential that often results from higher education may be greater for men. And favorable economic conditions increase the likelihood that men will get married and have children.⁸

Importance couples place on relationship affects plans to have children

Childhood experiences are believed to affect nearly all facets of life including adult relationships, parent-child interactions and, one might expect, the desire to have children. Interestingly, data from the 2001 GSS show that memories of a happy childhood make no difference in the decision to have a family; although 7% of those who had a happy childhood, and 9% of those who did not, expected to stay childfree, this difference was not statistically significant. Similarly, memories of being emotionally close to one's mother or father were not associated with different patterns of family planning.

The importance individuals placed on marriage, however, did have a significant impact on plans to start, or not to start, a family. While only 4% of Canadians who rated marriage as important or very important to their happiness reported not wanting children, 15% of those who felt that marriage was not very important or not at all important to their state of happiness did so.

The difference was even more pronounced between those who felt that being part of a couple was important or very important for their happiness and those who did not. Just 6% of individuals who felt that their happiness in life depended on a lasting relationship as a couple expected to stay childfree compared with 26% of those who stated that being part of a couple was not important or not at all important for their happiness.

Summary

Canadians between the ages of 20 and 34 who choose to stay childfree

represent a small, but significant, proportion of the population. Many diverse reasons account for why individuals decide not to have children, including never having wanted one, not finding themselves in the right circumstances, and religious or environmental concerns.

Despite a weakening link between children and marriage, childbearing is still associated with a committed relationship, and it is reasonable to find less childlessness among those who are married. Individuals without a religious affiliation are more likely to plan on not having children than do their religious counterparts. As well, Canadians who feel that being married or being part of a couple is not at all important to their happiness are considerably more likely to expect to stay childfree than those to whom these relationships are very important.

8. Heaton et al. p. 532-33.



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Update on families

This article is adapted from *Profile of Canadian Families and Households: Diversification Continues*, published as part of the October 22, 2002 data release on families from the 2001 Census. This document is available from the Statistics Canada Web site at www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/analytic/companion/fam/pdf/96F0030XIE2001003.pdf.

With the release of data from the 2001 Census, much new information on the state of Canadian families has become available. This update outlines the major changes that have occurred within families and their living arrangements over the last 20 years.

Canadians continue to marry and have children. However, marital histories are becoming more complex. Common-law unions, lone-parent families, smaller households and people living alone are on the rise.

In 2001, the proportion of "traditional families" — mom, dad and kids — continued to decline, while families with no children at home were on the rise. Married or common-law couples with children aged 24 and under living at home represented only 44% of all families in Canada, down from 55% in 1981. At the same time, couples who had no children living at home accounted for 41% of all families in 2001, up from 34% in 1981. In 2001, lone-parent families increased to 16% of all families from 11% in 1981.

Behind this shift in living arrangements are diverse factors, such as lower

fertility rates, delayed childbearing or a rise in the number of childless couples. In addition, because life expectancy is increasing, couples have more of their lives to spend together as "empty-nesters" after their children have grown up and left home.

Common-law relationships more frequent, especially among the young

The proportion of couples who live in common-law arrangements is on the rise. In 2001, 16% of all couples lived common-law up from 6% in 1981. The rate in 2001 is substantially higher than that in the United States, where 8% of couples lived common-law, but is much lower than in Sweden (30%) and Norway (24%). The trend toward common-law was strongest in Quebec, where 30% of all couples lived in common-law unions in 2001, a rate similar to that in Sweden.

Although common-law relationships are most popular among the young, they are also becoming more acceptable among older generations. In 2001, 48% of 20- to 29-year-olds who lived as a couple were in a common-law union, compared with 5% of

those aged 55 years or older. Common-law unions continue to be less stable than marriages. According to the 2001 General Social Survey (GSS), women whose first union was common-law were twice as likely to experience a separation as those whose first union was marriage.¹

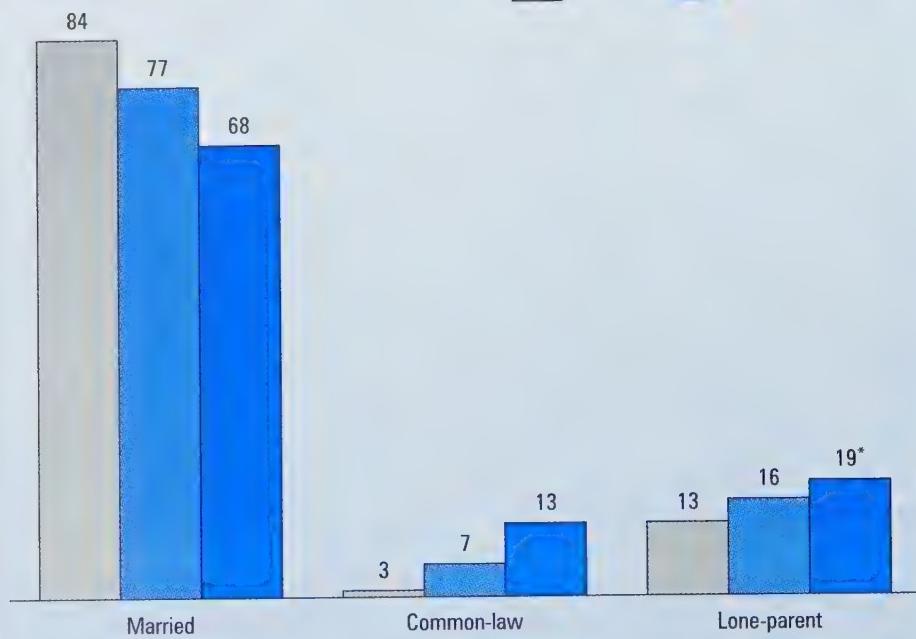
More children living in common-law and lone-parent families than before

It has become more acceptable to bring up children in common-law relationships, although childbearing is still more common in marriages. In 2001, 46% of common-law families included children, whether born in the current union or in a previous relationship. In 1981, this percentage was 34%. In terms of children, about 13% of those under the age of 15 lived in a common-law family in 2001, compared with 3% in 1981. This national average, however, masks large differences between the provinces. While in

1. Statistics Canada. 2002. *Changing Conjugal Life in Canada* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-576-XIE). p. 6.

% of children aged 0-14

1981 1991 2001



* Includes about 1% of children with other living arrangements.

Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses of Population.

Quebec, 29% of children under age 15 lived with common-law parents, only 8% of children in the rest of Canada had this living arrangement.

According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, children are experiencing parental separation at increasingly younger ages. Furthermore children born into common-law unions are more apt to see the separation of their parents. Research suggests that children who experience the separation or divorce of their parents during their childhood are more likely to separate themselves later in their adult lives.²

In 2001, about 19% of children did not live with both parents. Most of these children lived with a lone parent, the majority of whom were lone mothers. Only about 1% of children under age 15 lived with neither parent — these children usually stayed with other relatives.

Households becoming smaller

Canadian households continue to shrink as fewer people live in large households and more people live alone. In 2001, the average household size fell to 2.6 from 2.9 in 1981. One and two-person households have increased in the last two decades. By 2001, 13% of the population aged 15 and over lived alone compared with 9% in 1981.

Seniors more likely to live alone and less likely to live in health care institutions

In 2001, most senior men (61%) and about one-third (35%) of senior women lived with a spouse or partner and no children, little change from two decades earlier. The percentage of seniors residing with their adult children remained unchanged for men at 13%, but increased for women to 12% in 2001 from 9% in 1981.

Seniors were also more likely to live alone. In 2001, 35% of senior women and 16% of men aged 65 and over lived alone compared with 32% of women and 13% of men in 1981.

The percentage of seniors living in health care institutions has decreased to 9% in 2001 from 10% in 1981 for senior women and to 5% from 7% of senior men over the same time period.

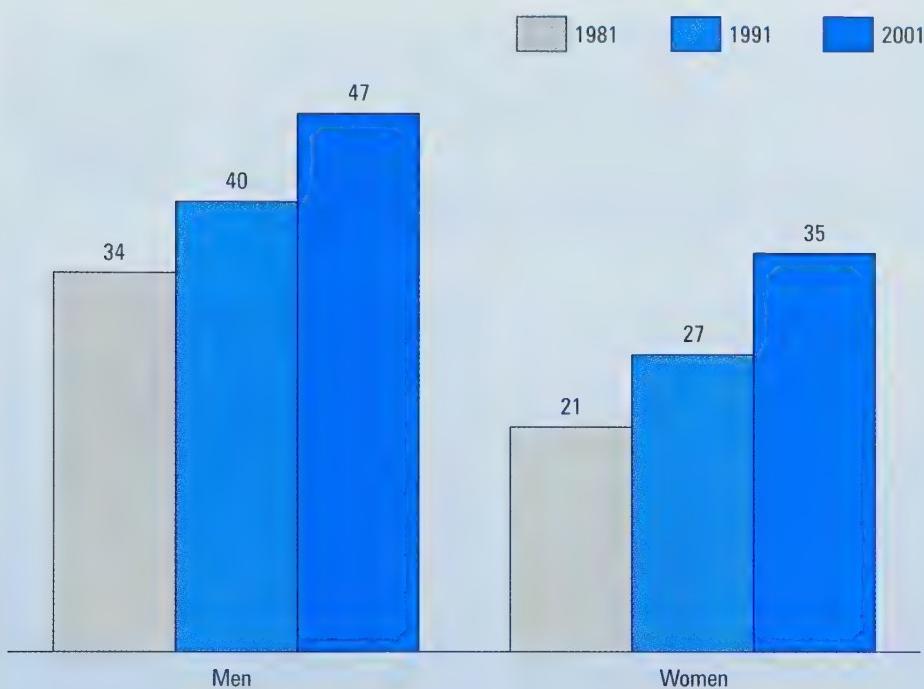
Young adults living with their parents

The new economy, with its intensified competition and rapid technological advances, has increased the need for higher skill levels and more education. More schooling, falling marriage rates, rising age at first marriage and the growth of common-law unions (which are more likely to dissolve than marriages) have extended the period during which young adults live with their parents. Young adults are increasingly remaining in or returning to the parental home. In 2001, 41% of 20- to 29-year-olds lived with their parents, a large increase from 27% in 1981. Young men in their early twenties are the most likely to live at home, with 64% doing so, compared with 52% of young women aged 20 to 24.

The fact that young adults continue to live with their parents has contributed to the decline in unions (marriage or common-law) among young adults. While the percentage of young adults in common-law unions has increased over the past 20 years, the percentage in marriages has declined by more, resulting in fewer unions among people in their twenties. In 2001, 35% of 20- to 29-year-olds were in a marriage or in a common-law

2. Statistics Canada. 2002. *Profile of Canadian Families and Households: Diversification Continues* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001 003). p. 7.

% of 20- to 29-year-olds who live with their parents



Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses of Population.

union compared with 52% in 1981. Men in this age group are less likely to be married or in a common-law union than women.

Stepfamilies³

Many couples in new marriages or common-law unions have children from previous relationships. In 1998-99, nearly 7% of Canadian children under the age of 15 were living in a stepfamily.⁴ Most of these children were part of a blended family,⁵ which most often included the couple's biological children and the wife's children from a previous relationship.

Summary

The Canadian family is continuing to be reshaped. More and more people are in common-law unions or form a lone-parent family. Children are increasingly being raised in these two types of families. The traditional

family, although the single largest group, has declined in popularity from two decades ago. Family trends in the 21st century will continue to evolve. Stay posted.

- 3. Stepfamilies refer to families in which at least one child is from a previous relationship of one of the parents.
- 4. National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, 1998-99.
- 5. Blended families contain children of both spouses from one or more previous unions, or one or more children from the current union and one or more children from previous unions.



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Health information? We've got connections!

Tech and teens: Access and use

by J. Douglas Willms and Bradley A. Corbett

This article was adapted from "Information and communication technology: Access and use," which appeared in *Education Quarterly Review*, vol. 8, no. 4. (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 81-003). It was based on a paper presented at the Pan-Canadian Education Research Agenda conference on May 2, 2002, which is available at the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) Web site at www.cmecc.ca/stats/pcera/RSEvents02/Bcorbett_OEN.pdf.

Students' use of technology in education is expected to improve their academic performance, increase their technological skills, and decrease inequities between groups.^{1,2} Many educators believe that teaching that incorporates technology is necessary to prepare students for work in the information age. The new economy has intensified competition among nations, and rapid technological advances require a skilled workforce able to cope with constant changes in the workplace as well as in day-to-day living. As society becomes more complex, people require higher skill levels while literacy requirements increase dramatically. Elementary and secondary schools have a central role to play in laying a solid foundation on which subsequent knowledge and skills can be built.³

This study uses data from the 2000 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) to examine Canadian 15-year-old students' use of information and communication technologies (ICT) at home and at school. Canadian students' results are compared with those of students from other countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In addition, the paper examines home and school factors affecting learning, including the availability of ICT at home and at school.

Nine out of 10 Canadian 15-year-old students have access to a home computer

According to the 2000 PISA, Canada ranked 11th among the 32 OECD countries in access to home computers. About 88% of 15-year-old Canadian students had access to a computer at home, compared with 91% in Australia, 83% in the United States, 82% in Finland and 67% in Japan.⁴ Internet access at home is less prevalent here in Canada and abroad. Only 69% of Canadian students had

home Internet access. Still, this is comparable with Australia (67%) and the United States (69%) and considerably

1. Pelgrum, W.J. and R.E. Anderson. 1999. *ICT and the Emerging Paradigm for Lifelong Learning: A Worldwide Educational Assessment of Infrastructure, Goals, and Practices*. Enschede, The Netherlands: International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement.
2. Industry Canada. 1997. *Preparing Canada for a Digital World*. www.strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/ih01650e.html (accessed February 25, 2002).
3. Human Resources Development Canada, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Statistics Canada 2001. *Measuring Up: The Performance of Canada's Youth in Reading, Mathematics and Science, OECD PISA Study — First Results for Canadians Aged 15* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 81-590-XPE). www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/81-590-XIE/81-590-XIE.pdf.
4. These countries were selected for the following reasons: Australia, because it is quite similar to Canada in its socio-economic status; Finland, because it ranked first in reading performance; Japan, because it ranked first in mathematics; and the United States, because of its geographic proximity to Canada.

This study uses data from the 2000 Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA). Conducted in 32 countries, PISA is a school-based survey that tests the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics and science at or near the end of their compulsory education.¹

In most countries, about 5,000 students from 150 to 250 schools were surveyed. In Canada, nearly 30,000 students from more than 1,100 schools were interviewed during April and May 2000 to enable interprovincial comparisons and within-province analyses.

Students' access to and use of information and communication technologies at home are related to their socio-economic status. The PISA index of socio-economic status (SES) included several measures describing economic, social and cultural aspects of students' families. It was measured using a statistical composite of parental education, parental occupation status,² classical cultural possessions³ and educational resources⁴ in the home, and family wealth (based on household possessions).^{5,6}

What is an odds ratio?

Odds ratios measure the strength of association between two variables. The value of an odds ratio can range from zero to infinity, where an odds ratio of 1.0 indicates there is no association between the variables being studied. In this study, the odds of having home computer is one area examined in logistic regression models including several socio-economic and demographic explanatory variables. Sex, family structure and immigration status are categorical explanatory variables where the odds ratio represents the odds of having a home computer for

a group (e.g. girls) relative to a reference group (e.g. boys). An odds ratio of less than 1.0 indicates that girls have lower odds of having a home computer than boys after accounting for all other variables in the model.

Parental education, parental occupation status and the number of siblings are continuous variables included in the model. An odds ratio for them indicates the change in the odds from a one point increase in the continuous variable. For example, an odds ratio of 1.04 for parents' occupational status indicates that the odds of having a home computer increases by 4 percentage points for each one point increase in parental occupational status after accounting for all other variables in the model.

1. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2001. *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000*. Paris: OECD.
2. The International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status was used to scale students' occupational status. It yields scores on a scale ranging from 16 to 90, where low values represent low occupational status and high values represent high status.
3. The Index of possessions related to "classical culture" was based on the availability in the home of classical literature (e.g. Shakespeare), books of poetry and works of art.
4. The Index of Home Educational Resources was based on the availability in the home of a dictionary, a quiet place to study, a study desk, text books and the number of calculators in the home.
5. The Family Wealth Index was based on the availability at home of a dishwasher, a room of their own, educational software, and a link to the Internet; and the numbers of cell phones, televisions, computers, automobiles and bathrooms at home.
6. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2001.

higher than Finland (54%) and Japan (38%). Only Sweden (82%) and Iceland (81%) exceeded Canadian students' connectivity at home.

Education-related possessions influence literacy

International assessments of educational achievement conducted by the

International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement (IEA) and the OECD over the past 20 years have consistently shown a strong relationship between students' academic achievement and the number of books in the home.⁵ Similarly, the development of literacy skills and educational outcomes are associated

5. Human Resources Development Canada, Council of Minister of Education, and Statistics Canada. 2000. *op.cit.* p. 33; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2002. *Reading for Change — Performance and Engagement Across Countries — Results from PISA 2000*. Paris: OECD. p. 131.

| | Canada | Australia | Finland | Japan | United States |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|---------|-------|---------------|
| | % of 15-year-olds | | | | |
| Computer at home | 88 | 91 | 82 | 67 | 83 |
| Link to Internet at home | 69 | 67 | 54 | 38 | 69 |
| Educational software | 77 | 80 | 51 | 16 | 76 |
| Calculator | 99 | 99 | 99 | 99 | 98 |
| Quiet place to study | 94 | 90 | 93 | 82 | 91 |
| Own desk | 85 | 90 | 95 | 96 | 78 |
| Musical instrument | 72 | 70 | 70 | 80 | 67 |
| Low family socio-economic status | 8 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 14 |

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Programme of International Student Assessment, 2000.

| | Computer at home | Link to the Internet at home | Odds ratio |
|--|------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| | | | |
| Girls compared to boys | 0.85 | 0.87 | |
| Parents' occupational status | 1.04 | 1.03 | |
| Parents' education (years) | 1.18 | 1.15 | |
| Lone-parent families compared to two-parent families | 0.40 | 0.54 | |
| Guardian families ¹ compared to two-parent families | 0.33 | 0.44 | |
| Number of siblings | 0.95 | 0.93 | |
| Immigrants compared to Canadian-born | 1.50 | 1.77 | |

1. A mother and a male guardian, a father and a female guardian or two guardians. This includes step- and foster families as well as families where grandparents or other relatives are guardians of the child.

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Programme of International Student Assessment, 2000.

with other educational resources. For example, students have superior outcomes if they own software or a musical instrument, have a desk of their own and a quiet place to study. As educational systems fully incorporate ICT into curriculum and teaching, access to the Internet at school and at home may become as

important a predictor of literacy as the number of books in the home or other educational possessions.

While rates of educational software ownership differed widely among Australia, Finland, Japan, the United States and Canada, other educational possessions showed considerably less variation. Nearly all 15-year-old

students in these five countries had their own desk and a quiet place to study, and about 70% had a musical instrument — Japan was the exception, with 80% of its students owning an instrument.⁶

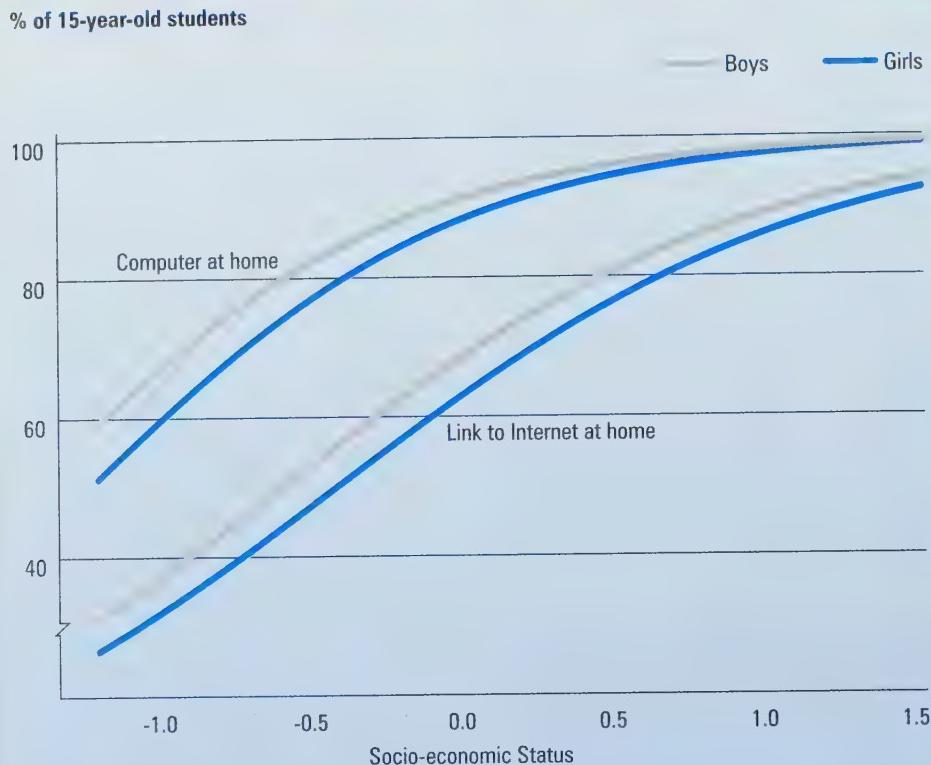
Socio-economic characteristics make a difference

The diffusion of many new technologies in society has not been equitable. Researchers theorized that people who are innovative and quick to adopt new technology tend to be younger and better educated, and earn higher incomes than others.⁷ Recent studies suggest that disparities among socio-economic groups in their access to ICT are narrowing, but the current inequality between students of lower and higher socio-economic status remains a concern.⁸

Students whose parents had more prestigious occupations and higher levels of education were more likely to have access to both a computer and the Internet at home. For each additional year of parents' education, the likelihood of having a computer at home increased by 18% and of having a link to the Internet by 15%.

Having a home computer and a link to the Internet were nearly universal among students with high socio-economic status (SES), regardless of whether they were girls or boys. Rates of access were much lower

6. Canada was expected to fare well in these comparisons, as only 8% of Canadian students came from families with low socio-economic status — a rate similar to Australia's but considerably lower than those of the other three countries.
7. Rogers, E.M. 1983. *Diffusion of Innovations*. Third edition. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc.
8. National Telecommunications and Information Administration. 2002. *A Nation Online: How Americans Are Expanding Their Use of the Internet*. www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/dn/index.html (accessed September 9, 2002).



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Programme of International Student Assessment, 2000.

among low SES students. In this group, the percentages of girls and boys with a home computer and a link to the Internet differed by approximately 10%.

Although the socio-economic background of families influences access to ICT resources at home, differences in other family and personal characteristics also affect access. After accounting for other factors,⁹ girls are less likely to have a computer at home. The odds ratio of 0.85 indicates that the odds of a girl having a computer are 15% less than the odds of a boy having one. The difference between the sexes for Internet access is of a similar magnitude.

Family structure also influences access to ICT at home. Children living in lone-parent families or families headed by non-parent guardians had much lower odds of having a computer

at home or Internet access. The odds of both these groups of children having a home Internet connection were only about one-half those of children in two-parent families. In addition, the number of children in a family also influenced ICT access: for each additional sibling, the odds of having a computer at home decreased by 5%, and the odds of home Internet access by about 7%.

The odds of having a computer were 50% higher for students who had immigrated to Canada, and the odds of having a home link to the Internet were 77% higher. This is partly due to the concentration of immigrants in urban areas, especially Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, where home computers and home Internet access are more common. In addition, many immigrants, who have come to Canada seeking greater

opportunities, invest heavily in their children's education to ensure that they have the skills to take advantage of these opportunities. Although family wealth of immigrant students, as measured by an index of family wealth derived from common household possessions, is lower than that of Canadian-born students, immigrant families have more home educational resources and cultural possessions and their children spend more time on homework.

Computers used less frequently at school than at home

In schools across Canada, the number of students per Internet-connected computer varies considerably. Averages range from 15:1 for elementary schools in Nova Scotia to 5:1 for secondary schools in Manitoba.¹⁰ Two-thirds of the computers in Canadian schools are located in computer labs and libraries, and only about 5% of teachers have adopted computers for inquiry-based learning where students seek information or knowledge by asking questions.^{11,12} Moreover,

9. Other factors include parents' occupational status, parents' education, family structure, number of siblings and immigration status.
10. Canadian Education Statistics Council and Statistics Canada. 2000. *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 1999* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 81-582-XPE). www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/81-582-XIE/free.htm.
11. Laferrière, T., A. Breuleux and R. Bracewell. 1999. *Benefits of Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Teaching and Learning in K-12/13 Classrooms*. Report prepared for the SchoolNet Program. Ottawa: Industry Canada.
12. SchoolNet. 2000. *SchoolNet's On-line Connectivity Survey: Final Report*. Ottawa: Industry Canada. [www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/Research_Papers/Research/SchoolNet_Research/Final_Survey_Report_2000\(English\).htm](http://www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/Research_Papers/Research/SchoolNet_Research/Final_Survey_Report_2000(English).htm) (accessed February 25, 2002).

researchers have found that over 75% of students use computers most often at home,¹³ suggesting that using ICT to improve students' skills and knowledge requires increased access at home.

According to the 2000 PISA survey, over 50% of students used home computers almost every day and more than 20% used them a few times each week, while only 13% never used them. In contrast, 18% of students used school computers nearly every day, with 21% using them at least a few times each week.

Schools broaden computer use

Students in low socio-economic households may have less home access to ICT for various reasons, ranging from economic issues to a lack of parental interest in technology. The primary policy response to this in Canada has been to provide access to Internet-connected computers in schools and other public areas, such as libraries. While this is a positive step toward improving students' access to ICT, the amount of time available at school for computer

use is insufficient and inconsistent among schools.¹⁴

Nonetheless, the availability of computers at school enables many students to use them, and is particularly useful for those who do not have a computer at home. For example, while students in lone-parent families were less likely than those in two-parent families to use computers at home, both groups were equally likely to use them at school. Similarly, students with siblings were less likely than only children to use a computer at home, but the opposite was true of computer use at school. While immigrants were much more likely than non-immigrants to use computers at home, the differences were not as pronounced for their use at school.

As expected, computer use at home was positively related to parents' occupation and education. However, these parental factors were not strongly related to computer use at school, indicating that socio-economic factors have little influence on availability of computers at school. While living in a lone-parent family or a family headed by a non-parent guardian or having a large number of brothers and sisters reduced the odds of using a computer at home, computer use at school showed little difference between lone- and two-parent families. Guardian-headed families had higher odds of using a computer at school than two-parent families, and having more siblings increased the likelihood of using a computer at school.



Use of computers more frequent at home than at school

| Frequency of use | At home | % of 15-year-olds | At school |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-------------------|-----------|
| Almost every day | 52 | | 18 |
| A few times each week | 21 | | 21 |
| Between once a week and once a month | 10 | | 23 |
| Less than once a month | 4 | | 22 |
| Never | 13 | | 16 |

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Programme of International Student Assessment, 2000.



Broader range of 15-year-old students use computers at school than at home

| | Use a computer at home | Use computers at school | Odds ratio |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Girls compared to boys | 0.68 | 0.64 | |
| Parents' occupational status | 1.02 | 1.00 | |
| Parents' education (years) | 1.12 | 1.01 | |
| Lone-parent families compared to two-parent families | 0.60 | 0.98 | |
| Guardian families ¹ compared to two-parent families | 0.56 | 1.52 | |
| Number of siblings | 0.92 | 1.06 | |
| Immigrants compared to Canadian born | 1.70 | 1.37 | |

1. A mother and a male guardian, a father and a female guardian or two guardians. This includes step- and foster families as well as families where grandparents or other relatives are guardians of the child.

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Programme of International Student Assessment, 2000.

13. Tsikalas, K., E.F. Gross and E. Stock. 2002. *Applying a Youth Psychology Lens to the Digital Divide: How Low-income, Minority Adolescents Appropriately Home Computers to Meet Their Needs for Autonomy, Belonging and Competence and How This Affects Their Academic and Future Prospects*. Paper presented in New Orleans at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

14. Canadian Education Statistics Council and Statistics Canada. 2000.

However, the availability of computers at school does not change the difference in use between the sexes: girls were less likely than boys to use computers both at home and at school.

Most 15-year-olds frequently use the Internet and electronic communications

Students most frequently used computers for accessing information on the Internet, communicating electronically (e.g. e-mail, chat rooms),

doing word processing, and playing computer games. Only about one-third of all students reported using computers to help them learn school material, and less than one-fifth regularly used educational software such as computer-based encyclopedias, dictionaries, math tutorials or reading exercises. About one-quarter of all students reported using a computer for doing programming, drawing, painting or graphics, or for analysing data with spreadsheets.

Summary

In 2000, nearly nine out of every 10 Canadian 15-year-old students had a computer at home, and those who did used them regularly. However, students from families with low socio-economic status were less likely to have access to computers and the Internet at home. Disparities between the sexes were negligible for students in families with high socio-economic status but were noticeable for students from low socio-economic status families.

Secondary school students regularly used computers to obtain information from the Internet and to communicate with others. Almost as many students used computers for playing games as for word processing, and less than one-third did so to help them learn school material. Moreover, school computers provided broader access to students in lower socio-economic families who may not have had computers at home. However, frequency of school use lagged behind the use of computers at home.

CST Government initiatives

Policy makers in Canada expect that the introduction of ICT in schools will improve academic performance, promote equity among students and, ultimately, equip young people to use and apply technology and software in their jobs. Co-ordinated federal policies and programs provide access to ICT in every school and every community in Canada. For example, the SchoolNet program was responsible for connecting every school in Canada to the Internet and is now aiming to ensure that every classroom is connected. "Computers for Schools" channels recycled computers, donated from government and corporations, into schools in low-income areas. In addition, Community Access Programs provide public access to the Internet on evenings and weekends.

CST

Nearly three-quarters of students use the Internet at least a few times each week



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| Activity | At least a few times each week | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| | % of 15-year-olds | |
| Internet | 71 | |
| Electronic communication (e.g. e-mail or chat rooms) | 60 | |
| Word processing (e.g. MS Word or WordPerfect) | 52 | |
| Games | 48 | |
| Learning school material | 32 | |
| Programming | 27 | |
| Drawing, painting or graphics | 27 | |
| Spreadsheets (e.g. Lotus 1-2-3, Excel) | 21 | |
| Educational software | 18 | |

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Programme of International Student Assessment, 2000.

The health of Canada's shift workers

by Margot Shields

This article is adapted from "Shift work and health," in the July 2002 issue of *Health Reports*, vol. 13, no. 4 (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003). Please see *Health Reports* for a full bibliography.

At any given time, approximately 30% of employed Canadians work shift; that is, non-standard hours. For most of them, shift work is not a choice, but a job requirement. Our society, which has long needed around-the-clock provision of medical, transportation and protection services, now also demands more flexible access to many commercial, industrial and financial services.

While shift work may be critical to the economy, evidence indicates that it can take a physical and emotional toll on workers. The most common health complaint of shift workers is lack of sleep, but shift work has also been associated with cardiovascular disease, hypertension and gastrointestinal disorders, and, for women, with reproductive health problems and breast cancer. Shift work may exacerbate conditions such as asthma, diabetes and epilepsy. Mental health disorders such as anxiety

and depression have also been linked to shift work.¹

Researchers have proposed three potentially interrelated pathways that may explain the association between shift work and health problems: disruption of circadian rhythms, adoption or worsening of unhealthy behaviour, and stress. Biological functions such as body temperature, cognitive performance and hormonal secretions follow a 24-hour cycle. Shift workers, however, must prepare for sleep when their natural body rhythms are telling them to be active, and they must be alert and ready to work when their bodies are preparing them for sleep. Most find that their circadian system never fully adapts and this disruption has been related to a variety of physical and mental symptoms.²

The association between shift work and health may also be mediated by unhealthy behaviour, most often

smoking. Some studies have also found shift workers to be more likely than regular daytime workers to drink heavily, eat poorly and have weight problems.³ At the same time, although the exact mechanisms are not fully understood, high stress levels have

1. Colligan, M.J. and R.R. Rosa. 1990. "Shiftwork effects on social and family life." *Occupational Medicine: State of the Art Reviews* 5, 2: 315-22. For a full listing of references that pertain to this section, please see the original article in *Health Reports*.
2. Harma, M., L. Tenkanen, T. Sjöblom et al. 1998. "Combined effects of shift work and lifestyle on the prevalence of insomnia, sleep deprivation and daytime sleepiness." *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health* 24, 4: 300-307.
3. Boggild, H. and A. Knutsson. 1999. "Shift work, risk factors and cardiovascular disease." *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health* 25, 2: 85-99.

This article draws on data from the 2000–01 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) to provide a brief profile of shift workers. It also uses data from the 1994–95 cross-sectional and the 1994–95, 1996–97 and 1998–99 longitudinal files of the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) to study the relationships between shift work and work stress, psychosocial problems, health behaviours, chronic conditions and psychological distress. Shift workers are compared with workers who had a regular daytime schedule. The analysis is based on full-year workers — those employed throughout the year before the survey — and examines each sex separately.

Work schedule was based on the question, "Which of the following best describes the hours you usually work at this job?" There were eight possible responses: regular daytime schedule or shift; regular evening shift; regular night shift; rotating shift; split shift; on call; irregular schedule; or other. Shift work was defined as anything but a regular daytime schedule. Four categories of shift workers were used in this analysis: evening shift, night shift, rotating shift and irregular shift. An irregular shift was defined to include split shift, on call, irregular schedule and other. For analysis based on NPHS data, night shift workers were excluded because of small sample sizes.

repeatedly been shown to be linked with poorer physical health. Recently, researchers have suggested that shift work is a stressor that should be included in studies examining both occupational and personal stress.⁴

This article provides an up-to-date profile of shift workers and studies their physical and mental health both at one point in time and over a longer period. The analysis is based on full-year workers — those employed throughout the year — and thus focuses on workers with more than a marginal attachment to the labour force. Because job profiles differ for men and women, analyses are conducted separately for each sex.

More than one-quarter of Canadian adults work shift

According to the 2000–01 Canadian Community Health Survey, 30% of men and 26% of women aged 18 to 54 who were employed throughout the year — nearly 3 million individuals — had non-standard schedules. About one-quarter of them worked evening or night shifts. Rotating and irregular shifts were reported more frequently,

each accounting for around four in 10 of these workers.

Not all workers were equally likely to work shift. Shift work was more common among people in blue-collar or sales and service occupations than in white-collar or clerical jobs; among men and women working less than 30 hours a week and men working more than 40 hours a week; and among people who worked on weekends.⁵

The likelihood of working shift decreased with advancing age and with marriage; for men, the likelihood also declined if they lived in a household with children. There was no difference between women workers with and without children, which may be because women were more likely than men to cite caring for family as their main reason for shift work.

Workers who were not postsecondary graduates were more likely to

have non-standard work schedules, as were workers in lower-income households. However, rotating shifts were relatively common among men from more affluent households, partly because men in health professions and protection services (whose incomes were quite high) tend to work rotating shifts.

Shift workers report high levels of work stress

Shift workers have relatively high levels of work stress, which in turn has been linked to a variety of health problems such as depression, anxiety, migraine headaches, high blood pressure and coronary heart disease. In 1994–95, men and women working evening or rotating shifts were more likely than their counterparts with regular daytime schedules to report that their jobs entailed high job

-
4. Taylor, E., R.B. Briner and S. Folkard. 1997. "Models of shiftwork and health: an examination of the influence of stress on shiftwork theory." *Human Factors* 39, 1: 67–82.
 5. Relatively few self-employed individuals worked the evening, night or rotating shift, but a considerable number had irregular hours.

| | Men | | | | Women | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | Regular daytime | Evening shift | Rotating shift | Irregular shift | Regular daytime | Evening shift | Rotating shift | Irregular shift |
| Work stress | | | | | | | | |
| High job strain ² | 17 | 30* | 29* | 19 | 29 | 40* | 45* | 34 |
| High physical demands | 47 | 56 | 59* | 50 | 34 | 54* | 68* | 52* |
| Low supervisor support | 19 | 31 | 17 | 16 | 17 | 17 ¹ | 17 | 17 |
| Low co-worker support | 32 | 37 | 36 | 29 | 34 | 37 | 52* | 34 |
| High job insecurity | 17 | 27 ¹ | 24* | 23* | 18 | 19 | 26* | 31* |
| Psychosocial problems | | | | | | | | |
| High personal stress | 33 | 44 | 36 | 32 | 43 | 41 | 45 | 54* |
| Married — problems with partner | 16 | 36* ¹ | 22 | 19 | 21 | 29 | 24 | 25 |
| Single — difficulty finding partner | 33 | 55* | 35 | 35 | 34 | 30 | 39 | 19* |
| Low mastery ³ | 20 | 32* | 23 | 15* | 23 | 24 | 31* | 24 |
| Health behaviours | | | | | | | | |
| Daily smoker | 27 | 45* | 33 | 28 | 23 | 28 | 30 | 26 |
| Inactive | 59 | 47 | 54 | 54 | 66 | 62 | 63 | 62 |
| Heavy drinker | 21 | 27 | 26 | 18 | 6 | -- | 5 ¹ | 7 |
| Obese | 13 | 9 ¹ | 15 | 10 | 11 | 10 ¹ | 12 | 12 |

-- Sample too small to provide reliable estimate.

* Significantly different from regular daytime schedule ($p < 0.05$).

1. High sampling variability.

2. "Job strain" was measured as a ratio of psychological demands to decision-making latitude.

3. "Mastery" measures respondents' perceptions of control over things that happen, ability to solve problems and feelings of helplessness.

Note: Evening shift excludes night shift workers.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Population Health Survey, 1994–95, cross-sectional sample.

strain, that is, high psychological demands coupled with low decision-making latitude. Job insecurity was common among both men and women with a rotating or irregular schedule and female workers on a rotating shift were more likely than those with a daytime schedule to perceive low support from their co-workers. High physical demands were reported by women working an evening, rotating or irregular shift, and by men on a rotating shift.

Psychosocial problems more common among shift workers

Since non-standard hours can limit a worker's participation in leisure-time

and family activities, the strain of shift work on family life can lead to social support problems and stress. While data from the 1994–95 National Population Health Survey (NPHS) support a link between shift work and psychosocial problems, this varied with the type of shift and whether the workers were men or women.

For men, the evening shift was particularly associated with psychosocial difficulties. Married men working an evening shift were more likely than those with regular daytime hours to report relationship problems, while single men were more likely to report difficulty finding someone with whom they were compatible. The

evening shift was also associated with low levels of mastery, meaning that evening workers were more likely than daytime workers to perceive a lack of control in their lives.

On the other hand, women working the evening shift did not report similar psychosocial problems, possibly because they had often chosen such a schedule. However, women who worked an irregular shift were more likely than those with a daytime schedule to report high personal stress — taking on too much, feeling pressured and unappreciated. And women working a rotating schedule were more likely than regular daytime workers to have low mastery.

| | Regular daytime | Evening shift | Rotating shift | Irregular shift |
|--|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | | % | | |
| Men | | | | |
| Trouble falling/staying asleep most of the time or sometimes | 38 | 45* | 44* | 41* |
| Less than 6 hours sleep | 10 | 13 | 15* | 16* |
| Sleep not always refreshing | 30 | 40* | 36* | 33 |
| Women | | | | |
| Trouble falling/staying asleep most of the time or sometimes | 48 | 49 | 51* | 54* |
| Less than 6 hours sleep | 9 | 13* | 13* | 11* |
| Sleep not always refreshing | 36 | 45* | 43* | 41* |

* Significantly different from regular daytime schedule ($p < 0.05$).

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2000–01.

Smoking common among male evening shift workers

Shift workers may pick up unhealthy habits in their attempts to cope with sleep/wake disturbances, family upset, and other stresses brought about by their work schedules. However, in 1994–95, the only difference in health behaviour between shift and daytime workers was among men working the evening shift, a high percentage of whom were daily smokers. Differences in the prevalence of inactivity during leisure time, heavy drinking, and obesity were not statistically significant between the two groups.

Physical and emotional health similar for shift and daytime workers

Previous research indicates a relationship between non-standard work schedules and specific chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and gastrointestinal disorders. Yet, a statistical model using 1994–95 NPHS data showed that shift workers and daytime workers were equally likely to report chronic conditions when socio-economic status, work stress, psychosocial problems,

smoking habits and demographic and employment characteristics were taken into account.

The disruption in circadian rhythms and the social isolation brought about by shift work are believed to contribute to mental health problems. The fact that shift workers get less sleep than regular daytime workers could exacerbate the situation. Even so, a model considering the relationship between shift work and psychological distress showed that distress levels among men and women with non-standard schedules were similar to those of workers with regular daytime schedules, when other variables were controlled for. That is, shift workers were no more or less likely than daytime workers to report feeling sad, nervous, restless, hopeless, worthless, or that everything was an effort.

The lack of evidence of a relationship between shift work and chronic conditions or distress may be due to the fact that most workers who have trouble adjusting to non-standard hours transfer to a regular daytime schedule after a short period. For these workers, symptoms of illness such

as sleep disturbance, gastrointestinal complaints and mood disturbance are apparent from the outset, and because they tend not to work shift for long, their physical and psychological problems may not be captured in a cross-sectional analysis.

In the long run, shift workers more likely to develop chronic conditions

However, analysis of NPHS longitudinal data indicates that those who worked shift in 1994–95 were at some increased risk over the long run.

For men, a non-standard schedule in 1994–95 was predictive of developing chronic conditions in the next four years. Compared with men who had a regular daytime schedule, those working an evening, rotating or irregular shift in 1994–95 all had increased odds of having been diagnosed with at least one new chronic condition by 1998–99.

For women, a non-standard schedule in 1994–95 was not associated with a new diagnosis of chronic conditions. This may be because women more often worked shift to accommodate other needs such as caring for

| Work schedule | Adjusted odds ratio | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------|
| | Men | Women |
| Regular daytime | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Evening shift | 2.0* | 1.0 |
| Rotating shift | 1.7* | 1.2 |
| Irregular shift | 1.7* | 1.0 |

Italics denote reference group.

*Significantly different from reference group ($p < 0.05$).

Note: The model also included occupation, work hours, weekend worker, self-employed, age, marital status, children, education, work stress, psychosocial factors, health behaviours, and chronic conditions in 1994–95.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Population Health Survey, 1994–95, 1996–97 and 1998–99, longitudinal sample.

family or going to school. It has been suggested that commitment to shift work may be the most important individual factor related to the ability to tolerate it. Another possibility is that certain chronic conditions among women were associated with working shift, but the limited sample sizes could not reveal these relationships.

For both sexes, working the evening shift in 1994–95 was associated with an increase in psychological distress over the next two years. By 1998–99, however, the average predicted distress level of people who had worked the evening shift in 1994–95 did not differ from that of regular daytime workers. This suggests that people either ceased working shift or learned to cope with a non-standard schedule.

Majority of shift workers move to regular day schedule

Although the overall proportion of employed Canadians working shift has changed little over the past decade, transitions out of shift work are the rule, not the exception. In the majority of cases, the transition is to a regular daytime schedule rather than to a different type of shift, or it involves leaving the labour force entirely.

Of those who worked an evening, rotating or irregular shift in 1994–95, less than one in five maintained this schedule in both 1996–97 and 1998–99. In fact, the proportions who had an irregular shift in 1994–95 and continued with this schedule in the two subsequent time periods were just 12% for men and 11% for women. By contrast, about 75% of the men and women who worked regular daytime hours in 1994–95 did so as well in 1996–97 and 1998–99.

Summary

About three out of 10 Canadian workers are putting in non-standard hours. Most do so not because it is their choice, but because their jobs require it. With a few notable exceptions, shift workers tend to be younger, unmarried, less-educated and less affluent individuals. Working shift is associated with a number of potential psychosocial problems including high work and personal stress, low sense of mastery and relationship problems.

Even when work stress, personal stress, health behaviour, socio-economic status and other work-related factors were taken into account, men working an evening, rotating or irregular shift all had higher odds of developing

a chronic condition in the next four years than did men with regular daytime schedules. For both sexes, working the evening shift in 1994–95 was associated with an increase in psychological distress over the next two years. Thus, consistent with other research, analysis of NPHS data suggests a link between mental health and shift work.

Given the problems experienced by shift workers, it is not surprising that most do not maintain non-standard hours for prolonged periods. Within two years, most shift workers either changed their hours or left the workforce. This supports earlier studies suggesting a "healthy survivor effect," meaning that the people who continue are a more robust group who are willing and able to tolerate the stress of working shift.



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Divorces continue to climb

For the third consecutive year, the number of divorces continued to climb in 2000. A total of 71,144 couples had finalized their divorce, up a marginal 0.3% from 1999 and an increase of 3.0% from 1998. Despite the rise in numbers, the crude divorce rate dropped to 231.2 per 100,000 population in 2000 from 232.5 in 1999.

The risk of divorce varies substantially with the duration of marriage. While the risk is less than one divorce for every 1,000 marriages during the first year of marriage, it then increases dramatically with each additional year. After the first anniversary, the divorce rate in 2000 was 5.1 per 1,000 marriages. By the fourth anniversary, the divorce rate peaked at 25.5 per 1,000 marriages. Afterwards, the risk of divorce decreased slowly for each additional year of marriage.

Divorces, 1999 and 2000

(shelf tables)

Catalogue no. 84F0213XPB



Homeowners spend more on repairs and renovations

Homeowners in Canada spent on average \$2,580 repairing or renovating their homes in 2001, a 37% increase from 1999. This translates into an increase of around 17% per year over the two-year period.

Lower-income households (those with annual incomes less than \$20,000) spent an average of \$1,250 on repairs and renovations in 2001. These households spent their repair and renovation budgets differently than those with higher incomes. Lower-income households allocated about 60% to repairs, maintenance and equipment replacement and 40% to additions, renovations and new installations of equipment.

In contrast, higher-income households (those with annual incomes of \$80,000 and over) spent an average \$4,690 with around 40% on repairs, maintenance and equipment replacement, and 60% on additions, renovations and new installations of equipment.

Homeowner Repair and Renovation Expenditure, 2001

Catalogue no. 62-201-XIB



Nearly 500 motor vehicles stolen daily

An average of about 470 motor vehicles were stolen each day in Canada in 2001. Police reported a total of just over 170,000 stolen vehicles during that year, about 10,000 more than in 2000. About one-quarter of stolen vehicles are never recovered, indicating that they may be linked with organized crime.

According to the 1999 International Crime Victimization Survey, Canada ranked fifth highest of 17 countries for car thefts. Nearly 2% of the population reported being a victim of a car theft during the previous 12 months. Police-reported data show that since 1996 the vehicle

theft rate has been higher in Canada than in the United States. In 2000, Canada's rate was 26% higher than the comparable American rate.

During the past 10 years, thieves have switched their preference from cars to trucks, largely the result of the growing popularity of vans and sport-utility vehicles. Although cars still account for 6 out of every 10 vehicles stolen, the theft of trucks has increased 59% since 1991, compared with a 3% increase in the theft of cars.

Juristat: Motor Vehicle Theft in Canada — 2001, Vol. 23, no. 1

Catalogue no. 85-002-XIE

(electronic version);

85-002-XPE (paper version)

Understanding the Rural-Urban Reading Gap

Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE, no. 1



Pay and specialty TV viewing on the rise

Viewing of pay TV and specialty television stations continues to grow year after year. In the fall of 2001, Canadians spent 22% of their viewing time watching Canadian, and 10% watching American, pay TV and specialty stations, compared with only 6% and 3%, respectively, in 1992. Canadians spent only 1.5% of their viewing time watching the new digital stations.

In the fall of 2001, 15% of Canadian households reported that they were subscribers to satellite television, compared with only 3% in 1997. By province, the rate varied from 12% in Quebec and British Columbia to 33% in Saskatchewan.

Despite increased access to cable and satellite transmission in recent years, the average time of 21.1 hours per week that Canadians spend viewing television has remained unchanged for the past three years. However, while the national average stayed stable, viewing time decreased by more than two hours among teens and by more than one hour among children. Seniors remain the highest viewers of television — men aged 60 and over watch 32.0 hours and women 35.5 hours a week.

The Daily

December 2, 2002

Catalogue no. 11-001-XIE

SOCIAL INDICATORS

| | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| LABOUR FORCE¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Labour force ('000) | 14,750.1 | 14,899.5 | 15,153.0 | 15,417.7 | 15,721.2 | 15,999.2 | 16,246.3 | 16,689.4 |
| Total employed ('000) | 13,356.9 | 13,462.6 | 13,774.4 | 14,140.4 | 14,531.2 | 14,909.7 | 15,076.8 | 15,411.8 |
| Men | 7,298.5 | 7,346.0 | 7,508.3 | 7,661.4 | 7,865.8 | 8,049.3 | 8,109.7 | 8,262.0 |
| Women | 6,058.4 | 6,116.6 | 6,266.2 | 6,479.0 | 6,665.3 | 6,860.4 | 6,967.1 | 7,149.8 |
| Workers employed part-time (%) | 18.9 | 19.2 | 19.1 | 18.9 | 18.5 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 18.7 |
| Men | 10.8 | 10.8 | 10.5 | 10.6 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 10.4 | 10.9 |
| Women | 28.6 | 29.2 | 29.4 | 28.8 | 28.0 | 27.3 | 27.1 | 27.7 |
| Involuntary part-time ¹ | 31.5 | 35.0 | 31.1 | 29.2 | 26.7 | 25.3 | 25.8 | 27.0 |
| Looked for full-time work | -- | -- | 10.6 | 10.0 | 9.0 | 7.4 | 7.5 | 8.2 |
| % of women employed whose youngest child is under 6 | 15.9 | 15.9 | 15.6 | 15.0 | 14.7 | 14.3 | 13.7 | 13.4 |
| % of workers who were self-employed | 15.7 | 16.1 | 17.1 | 17.2 | 16.9 | 16.2 | 15.3 | 15.2 |
| % of employed working over 40 hours per week ² | 21.7 | 21.2 | 18.9 | 18.9 | 18.4 | 18.0 | 17.5 | 16.9 |
| % of workers employed in temporary/contract positions | -- | -- | 9.4 | 9.8 | 10.0 | 10.5 | 10.9 | 11.0 |
| % of full-time students employed in summer | 50.2 | 47.9 | 45.7 | 47.2 | 48.8 | 50.9 | 51.3 | 52.3 |
| Unemployment rate (%) | 9.4 | 9.6 | 9.1 | 8.3 | 7.6 | 6.8 | 7.2 | 7.7 |
| Men aged 15-24 | 16.3 | 16.9 | 17.1 | 16.6 | 15.3 | 13.9 | 14.5 | 15.3 |
| 25-54 | 8.7 | 8.9 | 8.0 | 7.2 | 6.5 | 5.7 | 6.3 | 6.9 |
| Women aged 15-24 | 13.0 | 13.7 | 15.2 | 13.6 | 12.6 | 11.3 | 11.0 | 11.8 |
| 25-54 | 8.2 | 8.5 | 7.6 | 6.9 | 6.3 | 5.8 | 6.0 | 6.3 |
| Population with high school or less | 12.2 | 12.4 | 12.1 | 11.2 | 10.3 | 9.3 | 9.6 | 10.2 |
| Population with postsecondary completion | 7.9 | 8.1 | 7.4 | 6.5 | 5.9 | 5.2 | 5.8 | 6.0 |
| Population with university degree | 4.9 | 5.2 | 4.8 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 3.9 | 4.6 | 5.0 |
| EDUCATION | | | | | | | | |
| Total enrolment in elementary/secondary schools ('000) | 5,430.8 | 5,414.5 | 5,386.3 | 5,369.7 | 5,397.1 | -- | -- | -- |
| Secondary school graduation rate (%) | 76.4 | 76.4 | 76.3 | 76.0 | 76.3 | 77.1 | 76.9 | -- |
| Postsecondary enrolment ('000) | | | | | | | | |
| Community college, full-time | 391.2 | 397.3 | 398.6 | 403.5 | 408.8 | -- | -- | -- |
| Community college, part-time | 87.7 | 87.1 | 91.6 | 91.4 | 85.4 | -- | -- | -- |
| University, full-time ³ | 573.2 | 573.6 | 573.1 | 580.4 | 590.7 | -- | -- | -- |
| University, part-time ³ | 273.2 | 256.1 | 249.7 | 246.0 | 257.5 | -- | -- | -- |
| % of population 18-24 enrolled full-time in postsecondary | 34.3 | 34.6 | 34.3 | 34.4 | 34.4 | -- | -- | -- |
| % of population 18-21 in college | 24.7 | 24.7 | 24.6 | 24.7 | 24.6 | -- | -- | -- |
| % of population 18-24 in university ³ | 20.4 | 20.4 | 20.2 | 20.3 | 20.4 | -- | -- | -- |
| Community college diplomas granted ('000) | 79.5 | 85.9 | 91.4 | 88.4 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Bachelor's and first professional degrees granted ⁴ ('000) | 127.3 | 128.0 | 125.8 | 124.8 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Agriculture, biological sciences | 8,399 | 9,288 | 9,664 | 10,079 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Education | 21,277 | 21,421 | 20,638 | 19,374 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Engineering and applied sciences | 9,098 | 9,415 | 9,138 | 9,255 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Fine and applied arts | 4,194 | 4,142 | 4,105 | 4,276 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Health professions | 8,375 | 8,633 | 8,837 | 8,620 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Humanities and related | 16,127 | 15,889 | 15,014 | 14,721 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Mathematics and physical sciences | 7,142 | 7,005 | 7,091 | 7,239 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Social sciences | 49,035 | 48,422 | 47,751 | 47,760 | -- | -- | -- | -- |

-- Data not available.

1. 1996 is an eight-month average (January to August). Data after 1996 are not comparable with previous years.

2. Hours usually worked in their main job by workers aged 25 and over.

3. Includes undergraduate and graduate studies.

4. Includes those whose field of study was not reported.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, *Education in Canada, 2000* (Catalogue no. 81-229) and Centre for Education Statistics.

LESSON PLAN

Suggestions for using Canadian Social Trends in the classroom

Lesson plan for "Childfree by choice"

Objectives

- To discuss the pros and cons of having children
- To become aware of the factors that influence the decision to have children

Methods

1. Survey the class to find out how many students plan on having children in the future. What percentage expect to have no children, one child, two children or more than two? Discuss some of the reasons why some students expect not to have children at all, while others plan to have two or more. Are girls and boys equally likely to want a family?
2. According to the article, "Childfree by choice," the relationship between income, education and childlessness is not straightforward. Organize the students into two teams and have them debate the effect of income and education on the decision to have children.
3. In contrast to the 1950s, when families were large, many Canadians today expect to have no children or just one child. What implications does this have for Canada demographically, economically or socially? Discuss.
4. Although most people agree that, generally, children are better off when they have two parents, the number of lone-parent families is on the rise. What are some of the implications of bringing up a child alone?
5. Many childless people claim that there is a societal stigma associated with openly admitting to not wanting children. Have the students discuss why this may be the case.
6. Ask the students to list reasons for and against having children. Are there some people who should not have children? What types of personality traits may make someone a good parent?

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Educators

You may photocopy "Lesson plan" or any item or article in *Canadian Social Trends* for use in your classroom.

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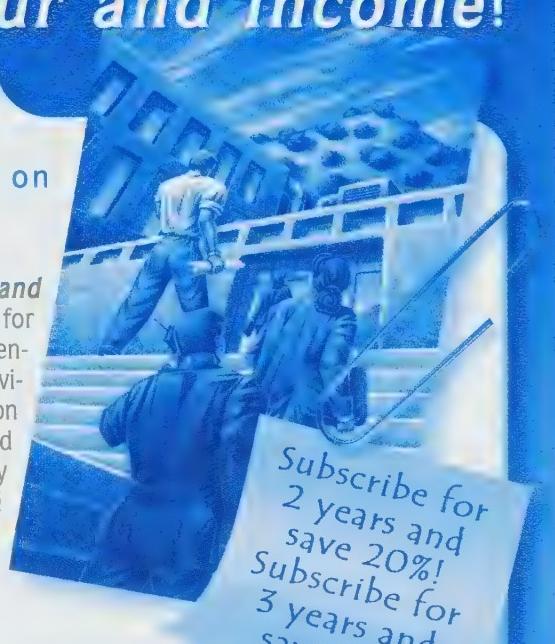
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